Naaman Vindicated,

As well from the

IDOLATRIES

OF THE

House of Rimmon

IN

SYRIA,

As from the

ABUSES

OF THE

ATHEISTS and *HYPOCRITES*

IN THE

Christian World.

By *Richard Pearson*, Priest of the Church of *England*.

2 Kings *Chap.* 5. 18. and part of the 19 Verse. *In this thing the Lord pardon thy Servant, that when my Master goeth into the House of* Rimmon *to Worship there, and he leaneth on my Hand, and I bow my self in the House of* Rimmon: *When I bow down my self in the House of* Rimmon, *the Lord pardon thy Servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in Peace.*

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Theology

Band I.

Naaman Vindicated,

As well from the

IDOLATRIES

OF THE

Houſe of *RIMMON*, &c.

CHAP. I.

Containing a brief Introduction, together with the Propoſal of the general Method and Deſign of the following Diſcourſe.

SUCH is the ſtrange Obſtinacy and Perverſneſs of ſome ill Men, that even the beſt things in the World are liable to be abuſed and corrupted by them; Antidotes themſelves may be turned into Poiſon, by a wrong Application; and the Word of God it ſelf, which is the ſavour of Life to others, and the chief means of Salvation, may be, and frequently is, turned into the ſavour of Death unto thoſe that Periſh. Thus, if bad Men can but find out any one Paſſage of Scripture, which (tho' in direct contradiction to the purport of many other Places, and after much ſtraining) they can make only to ſeem to countenance or excuſe them in the doing ſuch things, as their own vile Luſts make them firſt fully reſolved to commit; With what eaſe, ſecurity and credit, do they then conclude they may apply themſelves to the practice thereof? Nor was it therefore without ſufficient Grounds, that the Apoſtle *Peter*, ſpeaking of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, tells us, *That there are ſome things in them, which they that are unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as they do alſo the other Scriptures, unto their own Deſtruction.* Into the Catalogue of which *other Scriptures*, this paſſage here about *Naaman* may certainly with as good Reaſon be in- 2 Pet. 3. 16.

ſerted, as any other in the whole Bible: Since none perhaps has been more abuſed, or wreſted to worſe Purpoſes. From hence, ſome Men think themſelves ſufficiently authoriſed, to take up ſuch looſe Principles, that, come what will, or let them go where they pleaſe, they'r ſure enough that their Religion ſhall never create them the leaſt trouble: Since let them travel the whole World over, they can every where afford ſo to order the Matter, and their own Behaviour, that thoſe of every place where they happen to be, ſhall have no other reaſon, than to think their Religion the ſame with that of their own Country, be that what it will. From hence do they take Courage, if not down right to deride all the Doctrines of the Croſs, and thoſe that Practice them, yet, at leaſt, to excuſe, nay, even juſtify and applaud themſelves for all their baſe Shiftings and Turnings, and moſt diſhonourable double dealings both with God and Man.

As for their inviſible Part, as they would fain believe themſelves to have no ſuch thing, ſo they ſeem not much to ſcruple the reſerving that entirely for God, provided in the mean time they can but wreſt a Licence from him, ſo to diſpoſe of their dear outward Man upon all Occaſions, as that they may be ſtill ſure to keep themſelves in a whole Skin. If they can obtain thus much only, no more ſeems aimed at by theſe pretended Men of Wit, who then grow proud enough to think that they have fairly out-witted their Creator. And how do they hug themſelves, and ſcornfully ſnear out their inward Satisfaction, in having at laſt diſcovered even in thoſe ſo much deſpiſed Volumes, ſuch a rich precious Paſſage, whereby (as they would pretend) they can make God himſelf, even in the moſt material point, contradict his own ſelf; who has ſolemnly profeſſed, That *he will not give his Honour to another*, nor in his Worſhip admit of any Co partners.

But, *The Lord pardon thy Servant in this Matter*, &c. is the only thing like a Prayer, that can ever be obſerved to come from ſome Mens Mouths; and *Naaman*, *Naaman*, ſtill becomes the chief ditty not only of the Drunkards Song, but of all other ſorts of wretched Miſcreants alſo, whether more ſecret or profeſſed Enemies to Religion. If they can but force *Eliſha* here, ſo to reſolve this caſe of Conſcience, as they would have him, he'll then prove to this ſort of People as fit a Prophet, as if he had *Propheſied unto them even of Wine and Strong Drink*, nay indeed, far more acceptable and delicious. And let what will become of all the other Prophets, Apoſtles, or Evangeliſts, whilſt this alone, in contradiction to all the reſt, and to himſelf too, can be perſwaded by them here, to ſeem to reconcile the Worſhip of God and that of *Mam-*

on:

on, for this piece of ſervice only, they eaſily forgive and forget all his other Righteouſneſs; he ſhall then be allowed by them, to paſs for the only Man of God, nay, for a Friend ſo particular, that they'll endeavour to ſtrain Courteſies with him, and give this Prophet himſelf alſo free leave, *to depart in Peace*.

In ſhort, whilſt Atheiſts and Hypocrites would gladly ſpare all the reſt of the ſacred Writings, they'd eaſily allow this Text with their own Comments thereupon, to paſs for the only uſeful and Canonical piece of Scripture; to which they readily apply themſelves upon all Occaſions, as their common Sanctuary and ſure retreat.

What can be better worth the while therefore, than to endeavour to beat them off from this, which they look upon as their ſtrongeſt Hold, by cutting off all their Lines of Communication therewith, and ſhewing them how impoſſible it is for them to find therein any true Refuge.

If, inſtead of thanks for this performance, I ſhall chance to meet with nothing but rage and hatred; I muſt needs ſay, 'tis no other than what was to be expected from ſome Men. But the beſt of it ſtill is, that in this Argument, I can offend none, but either ſuch vile Monſters only, as are firſt offended at the very Being of the great Authour of their Beings, or elſe the deſperate Crew of loathſome Hypocrites, who indeed, if ſearched to the bottom, will be found the greateſt and very worſt of Atheiſts. Of whom how prevalent ſoever among us may be the Intereſts, or how deplorably great ſo ever may be their wretched numbers; 'tis to be hoped notwithſtanding, that no Man, as yet, needs either to be aſhamed or afraid to encounter them. For tho' we have ſometimes known very innocent Treatiſes, pleading nothing but the Cauſe of Piety and Good Conſcience, wholly ſilenced and ſuppreſſed, whilſt Perſons of Atheiſtical Principles have been freely ſuffer'd, in the moſt open manner, to diffuſe their Poiſon, without meeting with any of thoſe publick Cenſures which, in this Caſe, might juſtly have been expected; yet I ſhall not be ſo uncharitable to believe that the Empire of this ſort of Men is yet become ſo univerſal, as that it will be judged a thing Criminal to contradict them. And as degenerate as the World is grown, I'm ſtill in good Hopes, that (as I have not, ſo) I never ſhall live to ſee in any place of the World, any ſuch unhappy ſort of Government, the ſeveral particular Circumſtances of whoſe Conſtitution ſhall be ſuch, as will force the Miniſters thereof, either in good earneſt to believe, or ſo to act, as if they did believe, that the decay of Religion ſhould be for the Intereſt of the State, or their main hope of a civil Eſtabliſhment were chiefly

to

to depend upon the encreaſe of Atheiſm and Irreligion. And yet even in this ſadeſt of all Caſes, there would be this one great Comfort, That we might be moſt ſure and confident, that ſuch a Gouernment muſt needs be but of a very ſhort continuance.

But in the mean time therefore, under the preſent Conſtitution, which has made ſuch publick and repeated Profeſſions of diſcountenancing Atheiſm and Prophaneneſs, (whereof, whatſoever others may do, far be it from me, to queſtion the Sincerity, or ſuſpect any politick Compoſition between the Credit of ſeeming to do the one, and the ſuppoſed Benefit of really doing at the ſame time the quite contrary) How ſecurely, and with the greateſt Confidence may I now apply my ſelf to this ſo highly ſeaſonable and neceſſary Task, in reſcuing this ſo much abuſed Scripture, and endeavouring to wreſt this this dangerous Weapon out of the mad Hands of ſuch Hypocritical or Atheiſtical Perſons as would make uſe of it only to the great Scandal of others, and to their own eternal Ruine and Deſtruction? In order to which good end, I ſhall guide my enſuing Diſcourſe according to this method, and proceed therein by theſe following ſteps.

1*ſt*. I ſhall conſider briefly, how ſeveral have miſunderſtood this place of Scripture, and to what very ill Purpoſes they have apply'd it.

2*dly*, Endeavour to demonſtrate that it can by no means be taken in any ſuch corrupt Senſe.

3*dly*, Give the true meaning both of *Naaman*'s Petition, and of the Prophets Anſwer thereto.

4*thly*, I ſhall ſhew, That ſuppoſing what ſome contend for, were indeed the true genuine Senſe of this place of Scripture, yet from this Example we Chriſtians could have no ſufficient reaſon to preſume of an allowance, to diſſemble or comply in any of the like Caſes.

Laſtly, I ſhall ſhew upon what unalterable Reaſons and Accounts ſuch Compliances or Diſſimulations muſt needs be always highly unlawful, and a Crime ſo hainous, that nothing can excuſe that Chriſtian, who deliberately joins, or knowingly only ſeems to join, with others, in ſuch a Worſhip as he is ſufficiently convinced is falſe, or in any part thereof Sinful or Idolatrous. I begin with the Firſt, *viz.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

How several have misunderstood this Passage, and to what very ill Purposes they have apply'd it.

THIS Chapter contains at large the famous History of *Naaman* the *Syrian*, who was a Prince most renowned in his own Country, and one of the greatest Favourites of the Emperour to whom he served, and stood related. And tho' hitherto having lived in Heathenish Superstition and Idolatry, according to the general Custom of his Country; yet being (as we have probable Reasons to suppose) a Person of no ordinary Probity of Mind, and remarkable for several very commendable Qualities, which he had arrived at under the light of Nature; God *who will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoaking Flax* but delights to Communicate himself whereso'ever he meets with any good Preparations or Capacity, was pleased here, (as 'tis very usual with him) to find out a way, both to reward and reprove in this *Syrian* Prince, those good Dispositions and Beginnings, by bringing him still to the means of a farther degree of Grace and Illumination. And accordingly, the Divine Providence was pleased to order such a wonderful Conjunction of Circumstances, as might contribute to the Releasement of this great Lord, from his own far worse *Captivity*, even through the means of a poor *Hebrew Captive* Maid, then waiting upon his Wife in his Family. By whose relation of the singular Gifts and Abilities of the *Israelitish* Prophet, *Naaman* was first encouraged to take a Journey into the Land of *Israel*, and there address himself to *Elisha*. By whose directions, being now Miraculously healed of the Leprosie of his Body; the consideration of so convincing an Argument, and sensible Experiment of the infinite Perfection of that Being, by whose Power this great thing was affected, did, by the divine Grace, so powerfully work upon him, as to produce still another far greater Cure of the former Disease and Leprosie of his Mind also: Whilst he is brought thereupon to the Knowledge and Confession of the one true God, and to a Resolution for the future, of publickly owning and Worshiping such his supreme Benefactor. But yet there's one thing which this new Convert and young Proselyte prudently foresees, that he could not well avoid being still engaged to practice, after his return home; and therefore first desires to be resolved by the Prophet, whether or no he might not be indulged in this one particular, without any offence

offence to God. Which ſcruple or caſe of Conſcience, is both briefly ſtated and reſolved in the Words of the Text, now choſen to diſcourſe of. *In this thing, the Lord pardon thy Servant, that when my Maſter goeth into the Houſe of* Rimmon *to worſhip there, and he leaneth on my Hand, and I bow my ſelf in the Houſe of* Rimmon; *when I bow down my ſelf in the Houſe of* Rimmon, *the Lord pardon thy Servant in this thing. And he ſaid unto him, Go in Peace.*

Now by the *Houſe of* Rimmon, (as the learned have Conjectur'd) we are to underſtand no other, than the Temple of the Idol *Saturn*, who was, of all others, moſt highly Celebrated, and greatly worſhiped by thoſe of the Eaſtern Countries. And ſeveral Atheiſtical Spirits and Hypocritical Time-ſervers have in all Ages, greedily laid hold of this Example, for the better Patronizing of their own wicked Practices; whilſt they have been willing to underſtand theſe Words of *Naaman*, as containing a Petition of Indulgence, that he might, or at leaſt, as a Queſtion, whether or no he might not lawfully, together with that of the true God, join alſo the Worſhip of that Idol? Whether he might not be permitted upon Occaſion, for the ſatisfaction of his Maſter, and that he might ſtill retain his Prince's Favour, both go along with him into the Idols Temple, and there bow down himſelf, to worſhip the Idol as formerly; or at leaſt to ſeem to do ſo, whilſt he ſhould really, and in his Heart, there Worſhip the true God only? To which likewiſe they underſtand the Prophet's anſwering [*Go in Peace,*] as a plain Licence or Approbation of the Fact, and as much as if he had plainly ſaid, you may very ſafely do ſo, without any offence at all to God, or at leaſt, with confidence of his Pardon for the ſame.

And then from hence, ſuch Perſons readily conclude in the general, that all others alſo may eaſily obtain the ſame Licence and Indulgence of God, for the like Compliances and Diſſimulations; and that for the ſecuring of their temporal Intereſt, and eſpecially to avoid down right Perſecution, they may ſafely enough join with their outward Man, in ſuch Worſhip as they are perſwaded is Sinful, Superſtitious or Idolatrous, ſo they do but take care all the while to keep their inward Man rightly devoted, and to direct the Intentions of their Hearts and Minds to the true God.

And indeed, if from this Paſſage any ſuch concluſion could be regularly inferred, this would prove a moſt comfortable, and the only precious place of Scripture to ſome Men. For then Light and Darkneſs might eaſily be made Friends; *Jehovah* and *Belial* brought into a Communion with each other, their ſeveral claims being ſoon accommodated, and the Service of God and

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that of *Mammon* well enough consistent. Then they, whom the World usually accounts such, would be indeed the only true Politicians, who can side with every Wind, and change or dissemble their Practice and Profession, according to the most fashionable Religion, of those who shall happen to sway the Scepter, and can exalt or abase Men according to their Pleasure. In a Word, then must both the Apostles, and all the Primitive Christians be reckoned for the greatest Fools and Madmen, in that they so flung away their Lives, to no purpose; whilst the Doctrine of Passive Obedience would be indeed as fond, and to the full as Ridiculous, as some Men have impiously, and most prophanely endeavoured to represent it.

But, alas, the Case of *Naaman* here, is very widely, and perhaps no less wilfully mistaken, by such Men as are glad to catch hold of any thing, that may but seem to afford them any, the most feeble Support or Countenance in their double-Dealings. Who, tho' they may for the present highly applaud their own Ingenuity, in finding out such pretty Expedients, and make a shift for a while to deceive both others and themselves thereby, will yet be sure to find in the Conclusion, that God is a most jealous God, and cannot be so mocked or deceived by them; but will prove at last a consuming Fire to all such double minded Hypocrites, and most abominable Dissemblers. And so I pass now to the second general thing, which I am to endeavour to shew, *viz.*

CHAP. III.

That this Passage of Scripture can by no means be taken in any such corrupt Sense, as I have alread represented; nor consequently afford any Foundation for any such Inferences to be made therefrom.

THat *Naaman* here in these Words cannot be understood to desire, either really to Worship *Rimmon*, or *Saturn*, or any other Idol, together with the true God, nor yet to beg leave so much as to dissemble in the Case, or to endeavour to be thought to do so, may, I think, sufficiently appear from these following Arguments, grounded upon the express Context.

For in the first Place, for him to have desir'd this, would have been directly contrary to the present Sense of his own Mind, and the plain Convictions of his Conscience. We may I confess, meet with several in Scripture, who Worshipped the true

God in conjunction with false ones: As we read of that mixed People, whom the King of *Assyria* had planted in *Samaria*, in the room of the Children of *Israel*, * *That they feared the Lord, and serv'd their own Gods also.*

* 2 King. 17. 33.

Zeph. 1. 5. And the Prophet *Zephaniah* likewise speaks of those, who used to *Worship and Swear by the Lord, and to Swear by Malcham also.* But yet, they who stood thus affected, did not at the same time believe, that those whom they so Worshipped, were meer Idols and false Gods, and such as could not help them, but were on the contrary (tho' very falsly) perswaded of their Ability, to help and benefit those that Served them; which was also generally the only Motive to their so Worshipping, as is evident in the Case of King *Ahab*, of whom we read, * *That he Sacrificed to the Gods of Damascus, which smote him, and he said, because the Gods of the Kings of Syria help them, therefore will I Sacrifice to them, that they may help me.* Whilst on the contrary, I'm apt to believe, we can scarce find the Example of any one, who could ever yet find in his Heart, really to Worship that Being, from whom he could entertain no Hope at all, of receiving any Advantage by his so doing. What St. *Paul* affirms of those, who adore God Almighty, being no less true also concerning the Worshippers of Idols and false Gods, *viz.* They that come unto them, must however believe, that they are, and that they are Rewarders likewise, of those that diligently seek unto them. And accordingly, we shall find, that all which either the Prophets or Apostles thought requisite towards the reducing of the Superstitious *Heathen*, was only by the most substantial Arguments, to demonstrate to them, that those whom they Worshipped were no true Gods nor had any, the least Ability in them, to help or succour their devoted Servants; as rightly concluding, that after they had once sufficiently convinc'd them of this Truth, nothing further was then necessary, to dissuade them from their Idolatries.

* 2 Chron. 28. 23.

But *Naaman* here, was now so firmly perswaded of the Truth of these particulars, that scarce any Words could more fully express his abundant Satisfaction herein, than those which we find him use to that purpose, [illegible] of that same Chapter: *Behold,* (saith he) *now I know, that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel.* So that should he, after this have still desired to reserve to himself the Worship of any other, besides the true God only, he must have acted therein quite contrary to the plainest Convictions of his own Judgment; directly against all Reason, and without any of those Motives, which alone can be the Foundation of any mans really giving any Religious Worship to any thing.

But still in the second Place, we may also consider, That this would have been no less contrary and repugnant to those firm Purposes

Purpoſes and Reſolutions, which he immediately before ſignified, about his abſtaining from all Idolatrous Worſhip for the future: For he does in theſe very words, moſt ſolemnly declare and profeſs his Determination; *Thy Servant will henceforth, offer neither Burnt-offerings, nor Sacrifice unto other Gods, but unto the Lord.* Where, under the words (*Burnt-offerings* and *Sacrifices*) as under the moſt ſignal and noble Species, we are to underſtand comprehended all other Acts of external Worſhip whatſoever; as we find the ſame frequently uſed, according to this Latitude of Signification, in ſeveral other Places.

So that now, if we joyn all the ſeveral parts of his Speech together, it muſt needs ſound, as if he had, after this manner, addreſſed himſelf to the Prophet: I am now abundantly convinced, that thoſe whom I have hitherto owned and ſerved for ſuch, are indeed, no Gods at all; but that the God of *Iſrael*, is the only true one, to whom I am therefore fully purpoſed for the future (renouncing all the vain Idols of mine own Country) to perform all due Homage, and to bear true Faith, and conſtant Allegiance; and accordingly ſincerely determine, never any more as long as I live, to do any one Act of Worſhip to any other, under that Notion. In one thing only, I muſt needs deſire ſome grains of Allowance and Indulgence; and I hope God will not take it amiſs, if I ſtill retain one Rival with him; nor be ſo jealous, as not to give me free leave, as often as my Maſter goes to Worſhip, in the Houſe of *Rimmon*, (which to be ſure, according to his wonted Superſtition, will be very frequently) that I may alſo go in with him, and ſtill pay my Worſhip and Devotions with him, to that one moſt Renown'd Idol, as I have formerly been accuſtomed.

Now muſt not *Naaman*, think you, in any ſuch Petition as this, have both been ſtrangely inconſiſtent with himſelf, and groſly repugnant to his own Reſolution? And what would this have been elſe, but to have Breathed both Hot and Cold with the ſame Breath? Than which therefore what can be imagined more unlikely, concerning a Perſon, who, by ſo many other moſt ſubſtantial Inſtances, had demonſtrated himſelf, a moſt zealous and ſincere Proſelyte?

And ſtill, if any ſhould imagine, (as ſome have done) that *Naaman* here begged leave, to Bow down himſelf in the Houſe of *Rimmon*, not indeed as deſigning therein, any farther Worſhip to that Idol, but meerly to diſſemble his true Faith, and as a Blinder to the Eyes of his Maſter, that ſo he might conceal his change of Religion, from the knowledge of the King of *Syria*; whilſt all the time, under that Diſguiſe, he intended with his Heart and Mind, to Worſhip the true God only; as a ſufficient Confutation then, of any ſuch ſuppoſal as this, it may.

In the third Place be conſidered, That ſuch were his Words and Actions, and other Circumſtances of his Behaviour, as plainly enough ſhew, that he meant to proceed moſt openly and ingenuouſly in this whole Affair, without any ſuch under-hand Juglings or Diſguiſes; and that indeed he could not, either deſign or entertain the leaſt Hopes of being ſucceſsful in any ſuch Diſſimulation. For firſt, he declares his renunciation of all Idols, and his purpoſe to Worſhip the true God only, ſo openly, and before ſo many Witneſſes, that he could not but conclude, this would ſoon come to the Ears of his Maſter, upon his return home. And whereas, had he left his Attendance behind him, at ſome convenient diſtance, and ſingly betaking himſelf to the Prophet, had only whiſper'd theſe things in his Ear, there might have been then, ſome Colour to have ſuſpected ſome ſuch Hypocritical deſign in him: But now on the contrary, we expreſsly read in the 15*th.* Verſe, that as ſoon as he found himſelf Healed, *He returned to the Man of God, he and all his Company, and came and ſtood before him, and ſaid,* what there follows. Nor could he therefore after this, in the leaſt hope, ſo to Seal up the Mouths of all thoſe, and to conjure them to ſuch perpetual Silence, but that ſome one among ſo numerous a Retinue, (which we may well ſuppoſe attended him) would either out of zealous Superſtition, or for their Intereſt, and to curry Favour with the King himſelf, be ſure to acquaint him with the whole Matter. And ſtill, ſuppoſe he could have thought his great Authority over all theſe, to have been ſufficient to prevail with them to hold their Peace; yet even the two Mules-burden of Earth, which he carried back with him, he muſt needs think, would be apt to tell Tales of him to his Maſter, eſpecially, when it ſhould come to be ſo employed as he deſign'd, towards the making of an Altar, whereon to Sacrifice to the God of *Iſrael*, according to the *Jewiſh* Cuſtom, which could not in all probability, be conſtantly Performed by him ſo ſecretly, as not to come at laſt to the knowledge of him, who, (as he was well aware) had ſo many Eyes and Ears, to ſee and hear with.

Again, ſhould we ſuppoſe, he could be ſecure as to this particular alſo, yet that conſtant Abſence, which he was now reſolved upon, and his perpetual abſtaining from thoſe Idolatrous Offerings and Sacrifices, which were daily performed in his Country, and in which ſo great a Favourite as himſelf uſed formerly ſtill to aſſiſt and accompany his Prince; even this of it ſelf, he could not but conclude, muſt needs betray him. Nor could he hope, by a few external Cringes, now and then in the Houſe of *Rimmon*, to expiate for his notorous Neglect and Contempt, of all their other numerous Idols; or to hinder the plain Diſcovery of his

his having brought home another Religion, than what he carried out with him.

But laſtly, were it poſſible for us, notwithſtanding all theſe groſs Contradictions, and manifold Abſurdities, to take theſe words of *Naaman*, as containing a Petition of this nature, yet the Prophets Anſwer thereto, *GO IN PEACE*, may of it ſelf, abundantly ſuffice to demonſtrate, that we cannot underſtand them in any ſuch corrupt Senſe. For otherwiſe we muſt make *Eliſha* here, plainly to approve of a moſt groſs piece of Diſſimulation, and (like the falſe Prophets) to ſay *Peace*, where God hath ſaid no *Peace*; or elſe, if we believe him to have been a true Prophet, we muſt then, make God himſelf (in oppoſition to the whole Current of his revealed Will in all other Places, as well as in direct contradiction to his own Nature) to allow of a Co-rival, or Co-partner with him in his Worſhip; who has yet told us, *That he will not give his Honour to another*, and that nothing is more abominable to him, than all ſuch kind of Hypocriſie.

Nor will that Expoſition of thoſe, much mend the matter, who take theſe words of the Prophet, *Depart in Peace*, not as containing any Anſwer at all, or Reſolution, whether he might, or might not do the thing in Queſtion; but that, being wholly ſilent as to this, he gave him therein only the uſual Salutation at parting, and no more than if he had barely ſaid, *Farewell*, or *God b' w'ye*. For as it ſeems very ſtrange and unlikely, either that *Eliſha* ſhould ſo ſullainly put him off, without giving him any Satisfaction, about a Point ſo highly important, or that *Naaman* ſhould ſo contentedly depart, with a meer formal Complement, inſtead of a ſolid Reſolution: So I cannot ſee, how the Prophet could have ſafely beſtowed upon him, even ſo much as that uſual Salutation, tho' we ſhould make no more of it) had this Prince been indeed ſo much in Love with Hypocriſie and Diſſimulation, and ſuch a *Convert-Apoſtate*, as ſome have moſt injuriouſly endeavour'd to repreſent him. For St. *John*, ſpeaking of an *Apoſtate*, ſaith; *Receive not ſuch a one into your Houſe, neither bid him God ſpeed; for he that biddeth him God ſpeed, is partaker of his evil Deeds.* Where, (as a Learned Author obſerves) this Form of Interdicting, was in imitation of the the Practice of the *Jews*, in their *Anathema* againſt *Apoſtates*, who were to be excluded, not only from Commerce, but even from the ſmalleſt kind of ordinary Salutations. 2 Joh. 10. 11.

But indeed, tho' I ſhall not deny, that this form of Speech may perhaps, in ſome few places, be uſed only as an ordinary Bleſſing at parting, and ſignify no more than a bare *Farewel*, (as it ſeems uſed, 1 *Sam.* 1. 17. and 1 *Sam.* 20. 42.) yet upon a diligent Conſideration of all other places, wherein this Phraſe, *Go in Peace*, is to be met with, immediately following

ing upon any Precedent Queſtion or Petition, we ſhall always find it uſed as an Affirmative Anſwer, or plain Conceſſion of the thing enquired after, or Petitioned for; as *Ex.* 8. 18. *Judg.* 18. 5, 6. 2 *Sam.* 15. 9. and ſeveral other Places. And 'tis moſt certain likewiſe, both that the Prophet intended no leſs by it here in this Place, and that it was accordingly ſo underſtood by *Naaman* the *Syrian*, as an affirmative Reſolution of his Scruple, or a grant of the Thing, (whatſoever it was) which he asked leave to Practiſe. By which I am now reminded to proceed to the third general Conſideration or Enquiry, *viz.*

CHAP. IV.

What it was indeed that he asked, or what is the true Senſe and Meaning of Naaman's *Petition?*

NOW I find three diſtinct Senſes, according to which ſeveral learned Perſons have expounded and underſtood this Petition and the Anſwer to it: All which I ſhall think it neceſſary both to recite, and alſo to ſhew, upon what Accounts and Reaſons the two former of them cannot ſafely be rely'd upon nor received; but that the laſt only, is, in all probabily the true genuine Expoſition to be embraced.

1ſt. Then, ſome take it to refer not to the future, but to the time paſt, and ſo as to contain a Petition, or the hope of Pardon, only for what he had formerly committed, as if he had ſaid, *In this thing the Lord forgive*, or *I hope the Lord will forgive me*, or *not puniſh me upon that account*, viz. *That I have ſo often heretofore accompanied my Maſter into the Houſe of* Rimmon, *and there together with him, bowed down my ſelf to, and Supplicated that Idol or falſe Deity.* To which the Prophet's anſwering *Go in Peace*, muſt then be underſtood, as a plain Conceſſion of what he deſired, and no leſs than if he had ſaid; *Be of good Cheer, as well aſſured from me, in his name, That God does freely grant you Pardon for all that is paſt, and will not impute unto you what you did ignorantly.*

Lightfoot in Luc. 4. 27.

Now, tho' as it muſt be acknowledg'd, that this Expoſition wants not the Countenance of ſeveral Modern Interpreters of no mean Note, (among whom is the learned Dr. *Lightfoot* in particular) ſo it cannot be denied, but that, might the ſame obtain

obtain, 'twould both moſt effectually take away all manner of occaſion or pretence from Hypocrites, to excuſe or patronize their Diſſimulations, by any thing of this Example, and would at the ſame time alſo well enough become *Naamans* Circumſtances, as a ſingular good Argument and Specimen of his being a true Convert, and of a moſt pious Mind, to be ſo ſollicitous about obtaining God's Pardon, for that hainous Crime of Idolatry, which he had formerly committed, tho' in the time of his Ignorance: Yet I am very apt to believe, notwithſtanding all this, that this Expoſition will ſcarcely ever be allowed to paſs for genuine, by any one who ſhall well conſider theſe following Reaſons to the contrary.

1ſt. Becauſe, tho', as to the Actions relating to *Naaman*'s Maſter, the time may ſeem to be ſomewhat doubtfully expreſſed in the Hebrew Text, yet even there alſo *Naaman*'s own bowing down himſelf in the Houſe of *Rimmon*, is plainly expreſſed in the future. To which we may alſo add, that not only the vulgar Latin, and the Septuagint, but the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe, and the *Syriack*, and all other Verſions in the Polyglot, do read all, not in the time paſt, but future. So that for any particular Perſon, now at this diſtance, to go about to read it otherwiſe, in contradiction to ſo great and general Authority, may ſeem very juſtly Condemnable, as too bold an attempt of Alteration.

Again, Secondly, we may alſo conſider, that there are ſome things here related by *Naaman*, as the plain Motive or Occaſion of his bowing down himſelf in the Houſe of *Rimmon*, which yet we cannot but acknowledge, would have been mentioned to no purpoſe, but muſt have been altogether impertinently added under that Notion, ſhould we underſtand him to ask Pardon for what was already paſt. For what needed he then at all to have brought in his Maſter, or to have talked of what he uſed to do? Since, unleſs we will ſuppoſe him to have been all along a meer Hypocrite in his very Idolatry, we muſt needs conclude, that, tho' his Maſter had never gone in thither, nor there leaned upon his Hand, yet *Naaman* would have thought himſelf obliged, as well as others of his Country Men, frequently to have repaired to the ſame Temple, and there have been actually engaged to have done all he did by way of Worſhip, moved thereto by his own inward Affection and zealous Superſtition, and out of *meer Conſcience towards the Idol.* Whereas on the contrary, if we underſtand him to ſpeak of the time to come, we ſhall then find, that thoſe Circumſtances are very naturally, and upon good Reaſon mentioned by

by him. Since, now he was Illuminated and convinced of his former Error, and become a Proſelyte to the true Religion, he plainly foreſees, and accordingly intimates to the Prophet, that nothing but his deſire, in what he might, to gratify his Maſter, and to pay him thoſe civil Reſpects, which he ſtood obliged to, by the particular Office which he held at Court, could for the future engage him, or prove any Motive or Occaſion, either of his going any more to the Idols Temple, or of his doing any thing there, for which he might ſuſpect himſelf, to ſtand in need of Pardon or Indulgence.

Laſtly, He cannot be underſtood to relate to the time paſt, becauſe ſo, his Words will be found much too narrow and reſtrained, ſufficiently to anſwer or expreſs the neceſſities of his real Caſe; as indeed containing neither ſuch a full acknowledgement of his former Errors, nor ſuch a comprehenſive Petition of Pardon for the ſame, as was requiſite for a true Convert to have made under his Circumſtances. And had he reſpected the time paſt, I make no Queſtion, but that he would have expreſſed himſelf in ſome ſuch more general form as this; *The Lord Pardon me for all the manifold Idolatries I have been formerly guilty of*: Whereas now, we find him uſhering in his Petition with this Preface, *Only, in this thing, the Lord pardon thy Servant*, &c. and then he inſtanceth only in his bowing down himſelf, or Worſhipping in the Houſe of *Rimmon*. But had he then, can we think, in all the time of his Idolatry, been never guilty of Worſhipping any other falſe Gods, nor in any other place but in the before ſaid Chappel only?

This cannot be imagin'd, unleſs we can at the ſame time believe either that *Naaman* had always been a mere Heretick in his own Country, or elſe that it was the general Cuſtome of the *Syrians*, to Worſhip no other Idol but *Rimmon*: The firſt of which is altogether groundleſs, and moſt irrational to ſuppoſe; and the ſecond directly contrary to plain matter of Fact, as is abundantly atteſted in the moſt authentick Records of this affair. For does not the Scripture expreſly tell us; of the *Gods of* Damaſcus, *and of the Gods of the Kings of Syria*? And more particularly of *Baalim*, and *Aſhteroth*, the Gods of *Syria*? And has not the learned *Selden*, a large and curious Tract DE DIS SYRIS? In which he both ſhews, That Idolatry it ſelf had its firſt riſe and beginning in *Syria*, and tells us likewiſe particularly of *Bell*, *Aſhtaroth*, *Dagon*, *Dammuz*, *Moloch*, *Nergal*, *and the golden Calf*, as Idols whoſe Worſhip and Original was firſt owing to the *Syrians*, beſides ſeveral other falſe Gods whoſe Names and Worſhip that People afterwards borrowed from other Nations. 'Tis plain alſo from *Lucian*, (who was himſelf

2 Chr. 28. 23.
Jud. 10. 6.

ſelf a *Syrian*, and of the City of *Samoſata*) that they Worſhiped the Sun, the Moon, *Jupiter*, *Saturn*, *Venus*, *Juno*, and ſeveral other Idols borrowed from the Egyptians, who were almoſt infinite in their Superſtitions and falſe Gods. The ſame Author likewiſe particularly deſcribes both the Temples of ſeveral of the *Syrian* Idols, and what Rites they uſed in their ſeveral Worſhips of them. *Luci.* lib. de Dea Syria.

Now among ſuch a numerous company of other Idols, which the *Syrians* Worſhiped, we have the greateſt Reaſon to conclude, that *Naaman* alſo (who appears to have been a Perſon of ſo naturally devout a Temper) muſt needs have been engaged, as well as others, frequently to offer and to Sacrifice to all thoſe Idols, and that in all or moſt of their Temples; and conſequently that had he here deſigned to ask Pardon for his former Offences of this kind, he could never have thought it ſufficient to have ſpoken only of his bowing in the Houſe of *Rimmon*. For which he might have obtained Pardon, and have been utterly undone notwithſtanding, upon the account of his other multiply'd Acts of Idolatry.

So that this Queſtion of his, (for both the *Syriack* and *Arabian* Verſions read it, *Will the Lord Pardon thy Servant?*) I ſay, this Queſtion or Petition, call it which you will, muſt neceſſarily be taken to relate not to any thing he had done formerly, but to ſomewhat he might likely be engaged to do hereafter.

2*dly*, Therefore, another Expoſition is that of thoſe who rightly referring all to the future, do yet underſtand *Naaman* here, not at all to Queſtion, or to deſire to be reſolved by the Prophet, whether what he feared to be engaged ſtill to do in the Houſe of *Rimmon*, were unlawful or not; but ſuppoſing him already ſufficiently convinced, that his bowing there was indeed a very great Sin, do make all the force of his Petition to conſiſt only in this, *viz.* That the Prophet would not fail to put up his Prayer unto God, for the Pardon of ſuch his fault, if indeed he ſhould (as he ſeem'd to fear) be prevailed upon to commit it. And this Expoſition now ſeems wholly to depend upon the Authority of the vulgar Latin only, which reads my Text thus; *Hoc ſolum eſt, de quo depreceris dominum pro ſervo tuo*, &c. *This is the only thing, concerning which I entreat you earneſtly to pray to God in the behalf of thy Servant, that when my Maſter goeth into the Houſe of* Rimmon, *that the Lord would pardon thy Servant for this thing.* According to which, they underſtand *Naaman* here to deſire, neither any ſuch thing as leave to Sin, nor yet that God would approve of the Fact, (neither of which we may be ſure, would ever have been granted by *Eliſha*) but that upon conſideration of his own Frailty, and the powerful Temptations he ſhould meet with, foreſeeing that he

ſhould not avoid relapſing into his former Sin of Idolatry, or at leaſt of Diſſimulation; he does thereupon now only beg of the Prophet, that he would by his Prayers endeavour to intercede with God for his Pardon, after he ſhould actually ſo relapſe. And they make likewiſe the Prophet's anſwering, *Go in Peace*, to ſignify nothing more than a bare Promiſe, that he would ſo Pray to God for him.

Now it muſt be acknowledged, that this underſtanding of the Words (could we allow it for genuine) may ſeem at firſt wholly to preclude Hypocrites, from all colour and pretence of inferring the lawfulneſs of Diſſimulation, in matters of Religion, from any thing of this Example: For both *Naaman* himſelf was ſo far from thinking any ſuch matter, that on the contrary, (according to this Expoſition) he plainly ſuppoſes, that what he was likely to be engaged to practiſe, was in it ſelf a very great Sin, and ſuch for which he ſhould therefore greatly ſtand in need of Pardon. And beſides, there is a great deal of difference between aſſerting, That God may be prevailed upon to forgive, and ſaying, that God will never be at all offended at ſuch an action. And farther ſtill, it is one thing for *Eliſha* to aſſure this *Syrian* that God would actually pardon him, and another thing to promiſe him only, that he would pray to God for his Pardon.

But notwithſtanding all this, we ſhall upon better conſideration find that even this Explication will not (as it may firſt ſeem to promiſe) ſo effectually remove all ſhelter from Hypocrites, but that they may from thence fetch ſome Encouragement for themſelves in their Diſſimulation; and that however it cannot be ſafely received, as containing the true Senſe and Meaning of the Place. And that, for ſeveral very good Reaſons to the contrary.

1*ſt*. Becauſe it is grounded wholly upon the vulgar Latin, which is the only Tranſlation that may ſeem to favour this Senſe; whilſt yet it has no manner of Countenance, either from the Original Hebrew, or indeed any other Verſion.

2*dly*, Becauſe it depends upon a wrong Hypotheſis, as falſely ſuppoſing, that *Naaman* by his future bowing in the Houſe of *Rimmon* intended to perform an act of external Worſhip to that Idol, or at leaſt, that he was affraid of being engaged ſo far to diſſemble his Religion for the ſake of his Maſter. Whereas, on the contrary, I have already demonſtrated, and I hope, by unanſwerable Arguments from the plain context, that *Naaman* could entertain no ſuch Hypocritical deſign, nor was at preſent troubled with any ſuch fear or ſuſpicion concerning himſelf: But on the other Hand fully determin'd to deal moſt openly and freely in this whole matter, and to let all the World know what Religion he was of. And that

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moreover he had already ſo far proceeded herein, as that now he could not well conceive any reaſonable Hope of being ſucceſsful in the concealment of his new Religion, by any future complyances ſhort of down-right Apoſtacy.

3*dly*. Becauſe had *Naaman* had any ſuch ſecret Intention, (as according to this ſuppoſition) to continue in a known Sin, by playing the vile Diſſembler; I cannot ſee how *Eliſha* in this Caſe, could ſafely have promiſed him, ſo much as to pray to God for his Pardon. For to be ſure, 'tis never Lawful, for a Man to Promiſe any thing, but what it is alſo Lawful for him afterwards to Perform. And tho' we may ſometimes, with due Submiſſion, Lawfully Pray for what we know not whether or no God will grant; yet we can never Lawfully Pray to God, for what we are before-hand moſt aſſured, neither will nor can ever be granted by him. But now we are moſt certain, that God will never grant Forgiveneſs to any Sinner, while he continues Impenitent: And no better than ſuch, muſt *Naaman* needs be accounted, whilſt we here ſuppoſe him, in one Caſe, reſolved to continue a groſs Diſſembler to his Lives end.

So that for the Prophet to Pray for the Pardon of one, whom he knew to be thus affected and reſolv'd, would in effect, have been no other, than for him to have deſired of God, that he would be reconciled unto Sin it ſelf: Give a Man leave to be an Idolater; or not to be any longer offended with (what is naturally moſt abominable to him) even the moſt groſs Hypocriſie; than which, what can be imagined more abſurd?

4*thly*. It cannot eaſily be conceiv'd, how any ſuch Promiſe as this, (made without any concomitant Caution) ſhould tend to any other purpoſe, than only to encourage the ſuppoſed Delinquent, with greater ſecurity to proceed on in his Offence, by giving him probable hopes of Impunity therein. Since he could not but conclude, that the Prophet would never Promiſe to Pray for that, in which he knew he might offend God, but could never hope to be heard of him, and if he could hope to be heard, himſelf might then alſo hope for ſafety in his continued Diſſimulation and Hypocriſie.

Laſtly, if it ſhould be ſaid, That all that the young Proſelyte here deſir'd, or the other promiſed, was to Pray for his Pardon, not abſolutely, but only upon ſuppoſition of his true Repentance after his Lapſe, or at leaſt, for both theſe together in conjunction; tho' it muſt then be acknowledged, that were the Caſe indeed ſo, the Prophet might ſafely enough, in reſpect of himſelf, both paſs his word for, and likewiſe make good thus much: Yet conſidering *Naamans* ſuppoſed Circumſtances, 'tis very unlikely, that *Eliſha* would make ſuch a Promiſe, ſingly, and without adding thereto ſome neceſſary Caution. Nor can it be thought in this Caſe, that he would have been ſo very ſparing of his Words,

as to have diſmiſs'd him (as we find he does) with a bare *DEPART IN PEACE*; but would rather have thought fit withall, to have enlarged himſelf towards him in ſome farther Advice, to this, or the like purpoſe: *If you do hereafter commit the Sin you ſpeak of, I Promiſe you ſo far to comply with your Requeſt, as not to fail Praying to God, for your Repentance and Pardon thereupon. But yet, let me adviſe you, to have a ſpecial Care, that you do not ſo rely upon any thing of this, as in the leaſt to encourage your ſelf therefrom, in any ſuch foul Act of Diſſimulation: For tho' I may Lawfully thus Pray for you; yet I cannot tell whether or no I ſhall be heard therein; nor can I aſſure you thereupon, that God will, but have rather very great Reaſon to fear, that he will not grant Repentance; nor conſequently Pardon, to a Wretch, who ſhall ſo deliberately Sin againſt the plaineſt Convictions of his own Conſcience, and ſo chuſe to Offend, as preſuming before-hand of Repentance afterwards. And however, I muſt needs tell you, it is much better to chuſe to die, than deliberately to do any thing of which you know you ſhall need to Repent afterwards. And I ſhall therefore, much rather Pray to God before-hand, that he would be pleaſed to inſpire your Heart, with ſuch noble Courage, Generoſity, and Contempt of the World; as may enable you (if need be) cheerfully to forgoe all the Riches and Preferments, all the vain Honours and dangerous Favours of the Court, and to be ready to lay down your very Life, rather than ever entertain the leaſt Thought of venturing to offend God, and wound your own Conſcience, by any ſuch baſe and hypocritical Compliances.*

After ſome ſuch manner as this now, we have good Reaſon to think, the Wiſdom and Sincerity of the Prophet, would have prompted him to have dealt with his new Convert, had he really found him ſo halting, and hypocritically inclined, as the foregoing Expoſition would ſuppoſe him. And theſe Reaſons therefore I hope may ſuffice to ſhew, that the ſame cannot be allowed for Genuine, as well as that it was not in the Opinion of *Eliſha*, any ſinful Act, which *Naaman* foreſees himſelf likely to be engaged to Practiſe, and concerning the Lawfulneſs of which he here deſires to be reſolved.

I ſhall therefore now proceed to the third and laſt Expoſition, and that which ſeems to deliver the true Senſe and Meaning, of this difficult and very much mis-apply'd Scripture: Of which I take that to be the true Explication, which underſtands *Naamans* Petition here or Queſtion, to relate only to the right Interpretation of a civil or indifferent Action, which was liable to be miſconſtrued; and ſuppoſes his future Bowing in the Houſe of *Rimmon*, to be deſign'd by him meerly as a civil Act, out of Reſpect only to his Maſter, and in pure Compliance with the diſcharge of that particular Office, which he held at Court; as if he had ſaid: There's one thing, which if I ſtill continue, I hope

14 Lev 3 4 Exp 104. N 8

hope God will not take it amiſs at my Hands, or Puniſh me upon that Account: But yet before I venture on it, I deſire you to ſatisfie me, whether he will or not. The thing I mean is this; you muſt know, that I being in very high Place, and Favour with the King my Maſter, do generally go next his Side to ſupport him; and more eſpecially, when he goes to Worſhip in the Houſe of *Rimmon*, my Place requires, that I ſhould ſtill lend him my Hand or Arm to lean upon, that ſo he may Bow with greater Eaſe and State; and I thus aſſiſt him, both to proſtrate himſelf, and to get up again afterwards; which I cannot conveniently do, without obſerving the ſame Motions and Geſtures of Body that he does; not that I deſign thereby to do, or ſo much as to be thought to do any farther Worſhip to that Idol as formerly; but am reſolved at the ſame time, openly to declare, both to my Maſter, and to the whole World, in plain words, as well as by all my other Actions, the quite contrary. Now, may I, think you, upon theſe Conditions, (if I can ſo ſatisfie my Maſter) ſtill keep my Place at Court, and do what it ſo far requires, without any Offence to God? To which *Eliſhas* anſwering, *Go in Peace*, is as much as if he had plainly told him; *You may ſafely do this, without any Offence to him.*

And here now, by the way, I cannot well forbear taking occaſion to mention a ſome what like Caſe, and which alſo had a like Reſolution given of it, even by Chriſtian and Proteſtant Divines too: Both which had their date no longer ſince a go, than about the Beginning of the Reformation. When the then Emperour of *Germany*, being about to go to Maſs, according to Cuſtome, commanded the *Elector* of *Saxony* to be there, and to carry the Sword before him; for that's the Duty of the Houſe of *Saxony* upon ſuch ſolemn Occaſions: He having conſulted his Divines in the Caſe, who told him, That he might lawfully do it, ſince he was called upon to do his Duty, not to go to Maſs, went accordingly, accompanied by *George* Marqueſs of *Brandenburg*; but none of the reſt came, as *Sleiden* informs us. Which Caſe notwithſtanding, whether it was rightly ſo determin'd, or otherwiſe, depends (as I take it) upon the time of his ſtay there, and the other particular Circumſtances of his Behaviour, with which that Hiſtorian has left us unacquainted. Tho' afterwards conſulting *Thuanus*, I am from that excellent Writer inform'd, that the Elector only went into the Chappel, and leaving the Sword there, preſently came away.

Sleid. Hiſt. Ref. *l.* 7. *p.* 127.

But I return to *Naaman*——. Tho' againſt this Expoſition alſo, there may perhaps, be raiſed ſome Scruples and Objections, yet none of them, I think, will be found to be of any ſuch great weight or moment, as that they can bear much ſway with any judicious Conſiderator, eſpecially when we ſhall perceive how eaſily they may be

be remov'd, and will admit of a very ſatisfactory Solution. Towards which, I ſhall not think unfit to beſtow yet another diſtinct Chapter.

CHAP. V.

Wherein ſeveral Objections, which either have been, or perhaps may be made againſt this laſt, and (as I ſuppoſe) only true Expoſition, are fairly propoſed and anſwered.

AND 1*ſt* then, Whereas it is objected, that this Senſe or underſtanding of this Place of Scripture is wholly groundleſs and precarious; the Objection it ſelf may indeed much rather appear to be ſo, when we ſhall conſider what ſufficient Grounds and weighty Reaſons we have to embrace this Expoſition; as that alone which offering no manner of Force or violence to any of the Words of the Text, does alſo fairly avoid all thoſe Difficulties, Inconveniencies and Contradictions, which I have ſhewn to be the neceſſary Conſequences and Attendants of any other Interpretation; and makes *Naaman* to ask nothing in the leaſt repugnant, either to his now rectified Judgment or Reſolution; nothing but what was fairly conſiſtent both with his Belief, that there was no other God, and with his Determination alſo, that he would henceforth Worſhip no other, but only the God of *Iſrael*; nothing contrary either to his foregoing publick Declaration, or to any other Action or Intention of his, expreſſed in the Context; in a Word, nothing but what might well comport with the deſigns both of an honeſt, ſincere Proſelyte, and of a Wiſe and Prudent Man, reſolved in the firſt place to give God his due, and not to do any thing by which he might offend Heaven; and then deſirous in the next place, ſtill to ſerve and gratify his Earthly Lord and Maſter, in what he ſafely might, and without danger of incurring any ſuch Offence. Nor yet is *Eliſha* thereby made ſubject to the great Abſurdity of putting him off, with a moſt abrupt and ſullen *Farewel*, without giving any anſwer to his Scruple: But on the contrary, (according to the plain Senſe of the ſame Phraſe in other Places) is fairly underſtood, to reſolve his Queſtion in the Affirmative, and yet therein not to grant any thing but what was very fit for him ſo to do, (according to conſideration had of the particular Circumſtances of the Caſe) and well becoming both the Wiſdom, Faithfulneſs and Sincerity of ſo holy a Prophet. To all which we may alſo add, as a thing not a little conſiderable, that it cannot be imagin'd, upon what account, or to what purpoſe *Naaman* ſhould talk of his bowing in the Houſe of *Rimmon*, in this Caſe only, when his Maſter ſhould there lean upon his Arm if by his bowing

ing there, he had meant any thing of Religious Worſhip to the Idol, or had deſigned therein any more than a meer civil Act or Office of Service and Reſpect to his Maſter.

Whereas, if we underſtand it under this Notion only, it will then appear, both very natural and pertinent, that he ſhould ſo ſpeak of his Maſters leaning upon his Arm, as the ſole thing which could now occaſion his Bowing in that Temple, or his doing any Act there for the future, that could be liable to misconſtruction, or which he could think might ſtand in need of a right or favourable Interpretation. So, that you ſee, it muſt needs be very unjuſtly objected againſt this Expoſition, that the ſame is altogether beg'd or precarious, when indeed we find it built upon ſo many very good grounds of Reaſon.

2*ly*. Whereas, it has been objected, that the ſeveral Acts of *Naaman* and of his Maſter, in the Houſe of *Rimmon*, being both expreſs'd in the Original, not differently, but by one and the ſelf-ſame word, why ſhould we not therefore underſtand them alſo to have been of the ſame Nature, and done by both of them, out of the ſame deſign of Religious Worſhip? To this I Anſwer, that tho' it cannot be denyed, that the ſame *Hebrew* word is here uſed in, or for the Worſhip of the one, as well as for that of the other alſo, and muſt therefore imply the like external Geſtures of Body, to have been there uſed by them both; yet we can by no means from thence infer any neceſſity of underſtanding the Actions of theſe two Perſons, to be of the ſame kind alſo and nature, in reſpect of the deſign and intention of Mind, with which they were perform'd; which yet is always the chief thing to be conſidered, as that which creates a wide difference between Acts, which might otherwiſe be thought the ſame, if judged of only according to outward appearance.

In ſhort, the word שָׁחָה does ſtrictly and properly import not more, than a bare Bending, or Bowing down of the Body, or a Proſtration thereof upon the Ground, with ſtretch'd out Hands and Feet, without ſignifying any thing at all of the particular end or deſign of ſuch bodily Geſtures; but leaving that wholly to be made out, and collected from the Genius and Nature of the particular Place of Scripture, wherein we find the word us'd, or from other Circumſtances of the Context.

And accordingly, becauſe by ſuch outward Incurvation, or Proſtration of the Body, 'twas Cuſtomary, among thoſe of the *Eaſtern* Countries, to ſignifie and expreſs their inward Affection of Mind, that profound Honour and Veneration which they had, as well for their Princes and other great Perſons, as alſo for their Idols and ſuppoſed Gods; therefore the ſame word which properly ſignifies only ſuch Bodily Incurvation in the general, is alſo uſed in Scripture to denote, ſometimes the Acts of Religi-

ous Worſhip, and ſometimes a civil Act of Honour and Reſpect done unto Superiours. So that in this place likewiſe, it being very evident, from the circumſtances of the Context, that the Bowing of the King of *Syria*, and *Naamans* Bowing in the Houſe of *Rimmon*, were accompanied with ſo very different Intentions, the firſt plainly deſigning thereby the Worſhip of his Idol, whilſt the other (according to his own expreſs Declaration) could mean no more, than a civil Reſpect to his Maſter; there is therefore very good Reaſon, that tho' the ſame word be here apply'd to both, we ſhould yet not underſtand it in the ſame Senſe; eſpecially, ſince it does frequently in other Places (and will here) ſo fairly and naturally admit of a different Acceptation.

And accordingly we may obſerve, that our *Engliſh* Tranſlation, does very judiciouſly, and upon good Grounds, make a different rendring of the ſame *Hebrew* word; whilſt it calls the Kings Act, his *Worſhiping*, but *Naamans* only his *Bowing down himſelf*; plainly intimating thereby, the different Nature of the Acts, from the quite different Intentions therein.

But ſtill, 3*dly*. Others again, conſidering how expreſsly, and without any manner of limitation, or exception of Intention, the *Jews* were forbidden, as a thing unlawful, upon any account or pretence whatſoever, to Bow down themſelves before an Idol, tho' they ſhould at the ſame time declare, that they meant no Worſhip to it, but of God only; or deſign'd by that Geſture, ſome other civil Reſpect; have therefore from thence concluded, that *Naaman* being now of the *Jewiſh* Religion, muſt conſequently commit a great Sin, even in going ſo far as he deſign'd, and in that he would Bow down himſelf in a Place where an Idol was, tho' he deſign'd no Worſhip to that thereby, but meerly a civil Reſpect to his Maſter.

But now this Scruple or Objection, being founded upon a Miſtake, or falſe Suppoſition, will therefore eaſily be removed, when we ſhall conſider, that this Precept, as well as ſeveral others, was peculiarly deſigned for the *Iſraelitiſh* People, and given only to the natural *Jews*, while Proſelytes of another Country, (as was this *Syrian*) were not neceſſarily obliged thereby. For otherwiſe we muſt alſo conclude, that *Naaman* ſinned no leſs, in making uſe of the two Mules-burden of Earth, for the purpoſe he deſigned: Since the *Jewiſh* People were expreſsly forbidden the Erecting of any Altar, or Offering of Sacrifice, in any other Place, than in the Temple of *Jeruſalem* only, as we find Deut. 12. 13. 14. *Take heed to thy ſelf, that thou Offer not thy Burnt-offerings in every Place that thou ſeeſt, but in the Place which the Lord ſhall chuſe in one of thy Tribes; there thou ſhalt Offer thy Burnt-offerings, and there thou ſhalt do all that I Command thee.* And ſo *Lev.* 17. 3, 4. *What Man ſoever there be of the Houſe of Iſrael, that killeth*

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an Ox, or a Lamb, or Goat in the Camp, or that killeth it out of the Camp, and bringeth it not unto the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, to offer an Offering unto the Lord, before the Tabernacle of the Lord; Blood ſhall be imputed unto that Man, he hath ſhed Blood, and that Man ſhall be cut off from among his People. But now the Caſe was quite otherwiſe with the Proſelites of another Country, as *Naaman* was; who therefore eaſily obtains Licence, for the Non-obſervance of theſe two particular Prohibitions, which were given with a peculiar reſpect to the natural *Jews* only, and never deſigned indiſpenſably to oblige other Perſons alſo under ſo different Circumſtances.

Laſtly, It may, perhaps, be farther Objected, (and this indeed is now the only remaining Difficulty I am ſenſible of) That Pardon being nothing elſe but a Diſcharge from the Obligation to Puniſhment, and all Puniſhment ſuppoſing ſome Sin, all Forgiveneſs, properly ſo called, muſt needs involve under the very Notion of it, the plain ſuppoſition of ſome foregoing Fault or Offence, and conſequently, that *Naamans* Bowing muſt needs be ſinful, at leaſt in his Apprehenſion; ſince otherwiſe he would never (as we find he does) talk of Pardon for the ſame.

To which I Anſwer, That tho' all this would be very true and concluſive, if the preſent Queſtion were concerning Actions already done, in which alone, Pardon properly ſo called, can take Place; yet for a Man to ask, or for God to Promiſe this Favour before hand, with reſpect to an Action not yet done, (as according to the preſent Caſe ſuppoſed) would not be ſo properly a begging or granting of Pardon, in the ſtrict Senſe, as indeed a begging or granting of free Licence to do the thing, or an Aſſurance of the Man, that he may do it, without any Offence to God. And indeed, the Original Word נָשָׂא here uſed, and which we here Tranſlate, *Pardon*, is ſo far from always excluding this more laxe Senſe, that we may find it neceſſarily requiring the ſame in ſeveral other places of Scripture. Thus we read, Num. 30. 3, & 5. *If a woman vow a Vow unto the Lord, and bind her ſelf by a Bond, being in her Fathers Houſe in her Youth; and her Father diſallow her, in the Day that he heareth thereof, then not any of her Vows, or of her Bonds, wherewith ſhe hath bound herſelf ſhall ſtand: And the Lord ſhall* FORGIVE *her, becauſe her Father diſallow'd her.* The Lord ſhall *Forgive* her, that is, ſhall not be at all Offended at her, nor count it any Sin in her, but hold her perfectly Innocent in this matter, for not keeping that Vow, which could not be ratify'd, or oblige her, without her Fathers Conſent, or in contradiction to the Duty which ſhe ought to ſo near a Relation, who could juſtly challenge ſo great an Authority over her. And in the 12*th.* Verſe likewiſe of the ſame Chapter, we find the ſame Phraſe uſed in the ſame Senſe, con-

cerning the Wife, in the like Case, with relation to her Husband. And so when in a case of necessity, the People could not cleanse themselves, as 'twas requisite they should have done, before they eat the Passover, we find *Hezekiah* Praying for them after this manner.

2 Chr. 3. 18, 19. *The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his Heart to seek the Lord. tho' be be not cleansed according to the Purification of the Sanctuary.* And so the same Word here used in this very Case, may best be understood in the same Sense, not so much for *Pardon*, in the strict Sense of a known Fault, as for the favourable Interpretation of a doubtful Action: And *The Lord Pardon thy Servant*, seems here to be no more than if he had said, *Let not the Lord be offended at me*, or *I hope the Lord will not take it amiss, or look upon it as any Sin in me, but hold me Innocent, and take it in good part, if I do happen to bow my self in the House of* Rimmon, *upon that particular occasion only, and declaring my Intention therein, to be no other than such as I have now acquainted you with.*

Whereas, on the contrary, had he concluded the same to have been a Sin, he must also have concluded, that God must needs have been highly offended at him for it; nor could he then have entertained the least hope that ever the Prophet would have given him leave to venture on it. Thus, having bestowed more time and pains than ordinary, tho' I think, (considering how much it has been abused and made the common Refuge of Dissemblers) not more than was requisite, in proposing and endeavouring to establish the right Exposition of this place of Scripture, as well as in removing the several Difficulties and Objections that have been made against it. I proceed now to the next general thing designed, *viz.* to shew,

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CHAP. VI.

That supposing that which some contend for, were indeed the true and genuine Sense of this Place; yet from this Example, we Christians could have no sufficient Reason to presume of an Allowance for any such Dissimulation or Compliance; and much less have we now any Reason, so to presume from this Example rightly understood, and considered (as it ought to be) under all its several Circumstances.

WHereas we are most assured that God is a God of Truth, to whom all lying and dissembling is most abominable; Whereas we likewise know, that he alone created the whole Man, and does therefore naturally challenge, and can be contented with nothing less than the entire Service and Worship of our Bodies, as well

well as of our Souls, and that he has profeſſed, he will not give his Honour to another; whereas alſo we are moſt certain, that ſome things are ſo naturally and eternally Evil and Indecent, that no poſitive Command or Prohibition whatſoever, can alter their Nature, or make them otherwiſe: Were it now notwithſtanding all this, either any way conſiſtent with the eternal aud unalterable Nature of Good and Evil, or reconcilable to the eſſential and immutable Perfection of the Divine Nature, that we ſhould think it poſſible, for God to allow any thing of Hypocriſy, or to give a Licence to diſſemble, and that in a Man's Religion too; nay ſtill farther, ſuppoſe that from my Text it could be moſt evidently demonſtrated, (as the quite contrary, I hope, has been ſo) that God did once ſince the Creation of the World, think fit, (for ſome moſt extraordinary Reaſons, known only to himſelf) actually to give leave to one certain Perſon, *viz.* to this *Naaman* the *Syrian*, ſo to diſſemble his Religion, by joining with his Body in Idolatry, whilſt with his Soul he Worſhiped the true God only; yet when all is done, ſuch ſingular Licence could not in any Reaſon have been conſtrued to extend any farther, or to effect any other, than the very particular Perſon only, to whom it was ſuppoſed ſo expreſly given. Nor could we with any ſafety have from thence concluded, that it was lawful for any other beſides, much leſs for any Chriſtian ſo to diſſemble. For we find the Scripture every where full of ſo many plain Commands to the contrary, as well as of Examples of thoſe who are there highly commended, for chuſing to die rather than ſo comply. Nor can we in the whole Book of God find any one Example of the other ſort (beſides this of *Naaman* under our preſent diſpute) but what is there branded with ſome evident note of Infamy and Condemnation. So that it would by no means follow, that it is lawful for any other likewiſe upon occaſion, to diſſemble his Religion, tho' it could be evidently proved, that *Naaman* had expreſs leave from God ſo to do: And how is it poſſible then that we ſhould now make any ſuch Inference from this Example, when it is on the contrary moſt clear, that even *Naaman* himſelf neither asked nor received, nor ever ſo much as thought of having any leave or Indulgence to practiſe any ſuch Matter, but what was really of a much different Nature.

And indeed, whoſoever ſhall firſt well conſider the true nature of this particular Fact, together with the true State and ſeveral Circumſtances of the Perſon, and then diligently compare all theſe with the Fact, State and Circumſtances of thoſe other Perſons, who endeavour to abuſe this Example to their own vile Purpoſes, will eaſily diſcover ſuch a wide difference and vaſt diſproportion betwen them in all theſe reſpects, that almoſt any two of the moſt contrary things you can think of, may aſſoon be reconciled together, as any thing of this Precedent can be made ſerviceable towards the Countenanc-

ing ſuch Hypocritical Chriſtians, who at any time ſhall baſely reſolve to ſerve the Times, by outwardly communicating with Idolaters, or bodily joining in the Acts of any falſe or unlawful Worſhip.

For *1ſt.* If we conſider the Nature of the Fact it ſelf, I have already proved, that what *Naaman* here deſigned, was not any Religious, but a meer civil Act, done not out of any the leaſt honour to the Idol, but reſpect to his Maſter only, and in diſcharge of that particular Court-Office, which if he ſtill held it, would neceſſarily require thus much from him, done not out of any deſign to diſguiſe or diſſemble his Religion, nor with the leaſt intention or poſſibility thereby of deceiving any other Perſon, or of being thought to be ſtill what he was not; but accompany'd with the moſt publick Profeſſion, and plain Declaration of his being a Worſhipper of the living God only, and of his utter Abhorrence and Deteſtation or *Rimmon*, and all other Idols whatſoever. And this Declaration likewiſe to be ſeconded, and made good by the conſtant courſe of his other ſuitable Actions and Behaviour, in openly praying to, Worſhiping, and Sacrificing to the true God only, according to the Rites of the *Iſraelitiſh* People. From whence we may alſo farther conclude, that neither did he deſire to continue this civil Act, out of any covetous or ambitious Temper, that he was extremely fond of retaining his high Station, or poſſeſſed with any cowardly fear of Death in ſo good a Cauſe; ſince by what he was reſolved upon otherways, both to ſay and do, he could not but foreſee, that he muſt needs very much hazard the loſs both of his Riches, Preferment, and Life it ſelf, in caſe ſo abſolute a Prince as was his Maſter the King of *Syria*, ſhould happen, (as 'twas moſt likely) to be offended thereat: But only on the other Hand, ſuppoſing that if in conſideration of his former eminent Loyalty and good Services, as well as in a Senſe of the great need he ſhould ſtill have of him, it ſhould ſo fall out, (as 'twas alſo poſſible) that his Maſter ſtill retained ſuch an extraordinary Favour for him, as to be willing both to bear with his Exerciſe and Profeſſion of a contrary Religion, and to continue him in the ſame Civil Poſt: then *Naaman* alſo would think fit, in point of Prudence, not voluntarily to foreſake the ſame, or put himſelf out of place by refuſing to bow down himſelf, as it required only in that one Caſe already ſpecified; if indeed that action were to be looked upon, as only of an indifferent Nature, and ſuch as could be performed by him, (as he hoped it might) with a ſafe Conſcience.

And yet after all, we are alſo to conſider, that he durſt not rely upon his own Judgment, or venture upon this doubtful Action, merely of his own Head, without a cautious conſultation of God's Mind herein for his full Satisfaction, or before ſuch time as he had firſt received an expreſs Licence from him by the Mouth of the Prophet; being otherways reſolved and prepared, (as we have good

good Reaſon to conclude) utterly to have quitted both his Place, and together with that, all farther Intereſt in his Maſters Favour, in caſe *Eliſha* ſhould have determined his Queſtion in the Negative.

21 But now, I pray, what manner of Kindred, or Analogie is there between this Fact of *Naaman*, and that of thoſe, who can afford outwardly to joyn themſelves in ſuch acknowledgly Religious Acts, and to communicate in ſuch Sinful, Superſtitious, or Adolatrous Rites of Worſhip, as they do at the ſame time inwardly abhor? And this too, not only without declaring their Deteſtation thereof, to thoſe to whom it chiefly concerns them to make ſuch Declaration; but out of an intent to conceal from them, ſuch their Abhorrence, and on purpoſe that they may thereby be thought to approve of their Religion; prompted thereto only by the carnal Motives of vile Covetouſneſs and Ambition, and excelſive Love of the World, or at leaſt, only to avoid ſome temporal Inconvenience, or that they may keep themſelves in a whole Skin: And all this, not only without all colour of any ſpecial Indulgence from God for their ſo doing, but in manifeſt oppoſition to, and perfect Contempt, of his moſt expreſs and frequently repeated Commands to the contrary?

But ſtill again, if at preſent any devout Chriſtian of the higher Form, and more Zealouſly tender of the divine Honour, ſhould be apt to Object it, as a thing ſomewhat ſtrange and leſs accountable, either that *Naaman*, now convinc'd of his former Errors, ſhould deſire, (or that God ſhould grant him) an Indulgence in a matter of this Nature; which, howſoever it muſt be acknowledged Lawful, can yet hardly be denyed leſs expedient, as being a thing looking ill, and having in it, at leaſt, the appearance of Evil, as well as that which muſt needs make him more ſubject to the continual Temptation, and hazards of a Relapſe, that he ſhould be ſtill ſo frequently appearing in an Idols Temple, and there uſing the ſame outward Geſtures with his Idolatrous Country-men, tho' upon ſo different account: To this I Anſwer, That tho' I doubt not, but that it would have been both more ſafe and generous for *Naaman* without any more adoe, to have quitted both his Place and Maſter, and to have reſolved for ever after, to become an Inhabitant of the Land, as well as a Profeſſor of the Religion of *Iſrael*; yet there are ſeveral good Reaſons to be given, both why it could not well be expected otherwiſe, than that *Naaman* ſhould deſire to do as he did, and why God alſo ſhould think fit, ſo to gratifie him in his Deſire, if we do but conſider the particular State he was under, and the ſeveral Circumſtances of his Perſon. The great difference of all which may ſerve alſo, in ſome good Meaſure, to ſatisfie us, why God will not now, under the State of Chriſtianity,

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allow any of us to go ſo far as the bare Imitation of his Action, and much leſs grant any ſuch extravagant Licence of down-right complyance with Idolaters, as ſome Hypocrites have moſt unreaſonably endeavoured to infer therefrom.

And firſt then, we may conſider what *Naaman* had been, and was ſtill in his own Country, *viz.* A moſt Renowned Prince, mighty in Valour, and one through whom God had given Deliverance unto *Syria*, as we find all this in the firſt Verſe of this Chapter. In ſhort, he was a Perſon, whoſe great Merits had juſtly Advanc'd him to the higheſt Degree of Honour and Truſt with the King his Maſter, and given him no ordinary ſhare in his Friendſhip and Affections, as may eaſily be collected (had we no other Evidence thereof) from the extreme Sollicitude and Concern he ſhews, for the Cure of his Leproſie.

But now, if after this double Cure wrought upon him, *Naaman* ſhould have choſen to return no more home, but ever after, of his own accord, have perfectly deſerted the Service of his King and Country, this muſt needs have look'd in him, both as ungrateful and ſuſpicious, and would have been apt to caſt a very prejudicial and ſcandalous Reflection upon the *Jewiſh* Religion it ſelf; as if a Man could no ſooner become a Proſelyte thereto, but he muſt preſently forget all his former Duty and Allegiance, and ceaſe to be any longer an uſeful Subject to his own natural Prince. Beſides, he could not but conſider, that, as he was bound in Nature, ſtill ſo more ſtrictly, by the Duties of his new Religion, not to expoſe his Wife and numerous Family which he had left behind him, to ſuch eminent Danger, but to take a due Care of their Safety and Welfare, and more eſpecially to endeavour their Converſion alſo. And 'twas fit for him likewiſe to try the Experiment however, whether the continued Miracle, which he ſhould carry home with him, in his ſo wonderfully reſtored Health, both of Body and Mind, joyned to the good Example, and diſcreet Suggeſtions, which the opportunity of a familiar Converſe would afford, might not by degrees, prove at laſt forcible enough, to prevail upon the King himſelf likewiſe, to approve of, and embrace the ſame Religion. Nor did he know, but that God might be pleas'd, through his means, to give ſtill a far greater *Deliverance unto Syria*, than ever he had done before, tho' of a quite different, and far more excellent Nature.

Theſe now, or the like Conſiderations, might ſomewhat ſerve to counter-poiſe thoſe other Inconveniencies, and that Perſonal hazard of a Relapſe, which he might incur by his return back. But however, 'tis natural for Men to have ſo great a Love for their own Country, eſpecially when they happen to make ſo very conſiderable a Figure there, as did this *Syrian* Prince, that we cannot

cannot eaſily blame one under his Circumſtances, for ſo determining as he did. For it was no ſmall Tryal of the Faith of *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, that he could, when he had an expreſs Command for it from God, ſo readily obey, in forſaking his own Country and his Father's Houſe, to ſojourn in a ſtrange Land; how could it be then expected, that ſo young a Proſelite as *Naaman*, ſhould find in his Heart, to do the like, and much more of his own accord, and without any Command at all for his ſo doing?

Nor will it appear ſtrange, either that being reſolved to return, he ſhould alſo deſire, (if he lawfully could) ſtill to retain the ſame Grandeur and high Station, and all the Advantages attending it, by obtaining leave ſo to Bow in the Houſe of *Rimmon*; nor yet ſo ſtrange, that God ſhould think fit to grant his Petition, if we do but farther Conſider theſe following Particulars.

1*ſt*. We may Conſider, That even the natural *Jews* themſelves, were under ſuch a State or Diſpenſation, wherein they were chiefly moved to Obedience, by the Hopes and Promiſes of temporal Rewards and Advantages, and by the Fears and Threatnings, of temporal Evils and Inconveniencies; whilſt both the Doctrine of Eternal Happineſs, or Miſery in a Future State after Death, and the Evidences to ſupport their Belief, concerning the Reality of the ſame, were (comparatively) but ſparingly, and covertly, and far more obſcurely delivered to them. And conſequently, it was allowable in them, to ſet a higher value and eſteem upon the World, and outward Proſperity therein, than it is now either Lawful, or Reaſonable for them to do, to whom Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Goſpel, and who Live under the great Advantage of far more clear Diſcoveries and Demonſtrations, both of the Certainty and particular Nature of ſuch a future State. Nor was it reaſonable to expect from *Naaman* any more (at moſt) than from a *Jew*; nor (to be ſure) near ſo much, as is now highly neceſſary in every Chriſtian, who are juſtly required to be endued with a more Heroick kind of Spirit, and ſuch Self-denyal, and generous Contempt of the World, as may enable them, upon the like occaſions, readily to part with any of its moſt ſpecious and valuable Trifles, rather than do any thing, in order to ſecure the ſame, that may give juſt Offence to their Brethren, by having in it ſo much of the appearance of Evil.

2*dly*. We may alſo Conſider, that *Naaman* was no natural *Jew*, but only a Proſelyte of another Nation, who therefore, as ſuch, has a Liberty granted him, for the Non-obſervance of one particular Prohibition, which (as I have above obſerved) had always a more particular relation to the *Jewiſh* People, and was never

ſo

ſo indiſpenſably deſigned to oblige Aliens. Whereas, had he been a natural *Jew*, he could neither have reaſonably expected, nor would (in all probability) have ever obtain'd the like Indulgence.

3*dly*. 'Tis alſo farther to be Conſidered, That he was but juſt now become a Proſelyte, and it might be upon that account convenient, at the very firſt to allow ſomething to the natural Weakneſs and Infirmity of a meer Beginner, rather than hazard the diſcouragement of ſo hopeful a Candidate, by the denyal of him in one particular only, which as it was not ſinful in its own Nature, but ſuch as he might Practiſe with retention of his Sincerity, ſo was it alſo of no ſmall Conſequence, as to his Worldly concerns, and could not therefore be amiſs, that he ſhould be therein indulged, till ſuch time however, as his own greater Zeal for, and further Confirmation in the true Religion, added to the opportunity of his making proper Applications to his Maſter, might at laſt procure him a Diſpenſation, not only for the future omiſſion of that particular Ceremony, and civil Service towards his Prince, but for his total Abſence alſo from the Idols Temple.

Laſtly, This Circumſtance is by no means to be forgotten, that ſuch was his particular Country, wherein all Perſons generally being already Idolaters, he could not therefore, by going ſo far as he did, create any occaſion of Offence to any among thoſe, where all would be ſure much rather to be offended at him, for going no farther: Nor yet could he on the other hand, by this civil Action, (ſufficiently declared and underſtood by all, upon what Account it was performed) any ways contribute towards the farther Confirmation of any in their Superſtition and falſe Worſhip.

But now, by what new Art of reconciling Contradictions, ſhall we ever be able, to make all this agreeable to the Caſe of thoſe, who by their Profeſſion are not *Jews* but *Chriſtians*? Nor yet ſuch as are newly brought over to the *Chriſtian* Faith, but Baptized therein long ſince, brought up from their Youth, under all the means and advantages of a thorow Inſtruction, and full Confirmation therein: And, who Living likewiſe in a Country, where very many are ſure to be highly Scandaliz'd at ſuch Examples, as well as others Confirmed thereby in their Superſtitions, do notwithſtanding venture, in deſpight of Conſcience, and contempt of the plaineſt Prohibitions, to joyn with others in ſuch Acts of Worſhip, as they verily believe to be Idolatrous or ſinful. With what Face can ſuch Wretches plead this Scripture for their Excuſe? Whereas, you ſee, that nothing either of the matters of Fact, or of the State and Circumſtances of the Perſons are at all agreeable.

And

And indeed, when all is done, ſuch kind of Perſons ſeem to make uſe of this Expedient, and love to be continually talking of *Naaman*'s Caſe, merely out of a deſign to amuſe and ſtop the Mouths of leſs intelligent Chriſtians, who are naturally apt to upbraid them for their Levity and Diſſimulation, that ſo they may be able with more quiet and leſs diſgrace of the World, to purſue their ſecular ends, by the means of ſuch baſe Compliances, rather than that they are themſelves in good earneſt ſatisfied, that there is any real Countenance for them from any thing of this Example, or that they are truly and heartily at all ſollicitous, or concern'd about what is lawful or unlawful for them. Nothing more uſual with the Hypocrite, than to think he Sins with Credit, when he can Sin with Scripture in his Mouth, and force his Excuſe even from that from whence he will find his Condemnation. And indeed of all deſperate Offenders, none's like him, who when he has done a wicked thing, endeavours to avoid the Odium thereof, and the juſt Cenſures of others, by preſently ſculking himſelf behind ſome Text for his ſecurity; where, at the ſame time he ſecretly laughs at his own Impudence, and the Simplicity of thoſe who can thereby be ſo eaſily put off and ſatisfied.

But however, as well for an Antidote againſt the ſpreading Poiſon and Infection of ſuch Mens moſt falſe and dangerous Suggeſtions, as alſo for the more abundant conviction and ſatisfaction of all Sincere and Well-meaning Perſons, I ſhall next proceed to my laſt general Propoſal, *viz.*

Not only by Arguments drawn from Hiſtory and matter of Fact, but alſo by direct poſitive places of Scripture, as well as from the eternal Reaſons and unalterable Nature of things themſelves, to demonſtrate, That ſuch Compliances or Diſſimulations muſt needs be always highly unlawful, and a Crime ſo hainous, that nothing can excuſe that Chriſtian who deliberately joins, or knowingly only ſeems to join with others in ſuch a Worſhip or Service, as he is ſufficiently convinced to be falſe, or in any part thereof Sinful or Idolatrous.

For the more Methodical performance of which Task, I ſhall in the firſt Place conſider

CHAP. VII.

Who, and what kind of Perſons they were, that firſt Taught and Practiſed ſuch horrid Diſſimulation in matters of Religion, and upon what Pretences.

AND indeed had Men but half that Jealouſie and tender concern for the good of the Soul, as generally they have for that of the Body, and the periſhing Trifles that belong to it, this ſingle Conſideration then, without any more ado, might prove a ſufficient Antidote againſt this deadly Poiſon; nor would there need, almoſt, any other Confutation of ſuch pernicious Doctrines, than the bare diſcovery and true Character of the chief Authors and Promoters thereof, whom we ſhall find all along to have been no better ſtill, than either ſome of the moſt vile and infamous among all the impure Sties of accurſed Hereticks, or elſe ſome main Ringleaders in the damnable Society of ſuch Perſons, (for *Men* I know not how to call them, nor yet *Devils*) who have arrived to ſuch a monſtrous height of more than Diabolical Impudence and Impiety, as to make a Mock at that ſacred Being, which Devils themſelves both believe and tremble at.

Among thoſe who have been called Chriſtians, he who firſt invented and ſet on foot this curſed Engine of Diſſimulation, ſo deſtructive to Chriſtianity, was a Perſon whoſe very Name carries in it the black Myſteries of Hell, and who came withal from a Country ſo fruitful in ſuch kind of Monſters, that our Saviour himſelf has given them this Character, *That they Worſhiped they knew not what.* After this, I ſuppoſe, I can ſcarce need to tell you, that I mean no other than the wicked *Simon Magus*, or *Simon* the *Sorcerer*, who (tho' it had been better for him never to have been Born) had *Samaria* for the unhappy Place of his Nativity. No ſooner ſcarce had this Wretch been Baptiſed, but preſently he behaved himſelf ſo very unſuitable to his Profeſſion, that St. *Peter*, even ſo early, ſeems to queſtion whether or no he had not already ſinned himſelf beyond Forgiveneſs; and concludes *him to be in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and in the bond of Iniquity.* But afterwards he grew

Acts c. 8.

ſtill

ſtill far worſe and worſe, and became at laſt the very Maſter-piece of Satan, and the firſt great Father of almoſt all other Hereticks. Upon which account that glorious Martyr and Diſciple of St. *John*, *Ignatius*, in his Epiſtle to the *Trallians*, ſticks not to call him, τὸν πρωτότοκον τῦ διαβόλε υἱὸν, *The firſt begotten Son of the Devil.* And indeed in this one Engine of his, did the Prince of Darkneſs ſeem to have repoſed ſo great a Confidence, as if he had been in hopes to have ſtifled Chriſtianity in its Infancy, by raiſing up one *Simon* to defeat the other, and to have made this latter no leſs a *Peter* too, or Rock, whereon the Church of Chriſt, inſtead of being built, might ſuffer Shipwrack. I ſhall not need to relate, and indeed Chriſtian Ears would by no means bear the hearing of thoſe many other monſtrous Impurities, which this Arch-Heretick both taught and practiſed. But of all his other moſt deteſtable Impieties, there's none ſeems of more pernicious Conſequence at once to the very Deſign and Genius of the Goſpel, and to all the Articles of our Chriſtian Belief; none ſtrikes more immediately at the very preſent Life and Being, as well as at the future Propagation of Chriſtianity, than that curſed Liberty of his, which he (for ought I know, of all Men firſt) ſo freely Grants to his Diſciples, not only to Diſſemble, but even to deny (in whole or in part) the Faith upon occaſion. We do not find that the Pagans ever went about to force the Chriſtians to Sacrifice, or created them any Publick Diſturbance upon their refuſal ſo to do, till ſome time under the Reign of *Nero*. Before which therefore there could be no neceſſity, nor indeed occaſion to make any ſuch publick Proviſion againſt Perſecution, by the inventing of a Doctrine ſo naturally diſhonourable and contrary to the common Sentiments of Mankind, that I am perſwaded it could never otherwiſe have once entred into the Thoughts of any one, no, not even of this vile Miſcreant himſelf, had it not been upon the Emergency of ſome ſuch urgent occaſion: Nothing elſe but the Temptation of ſuch Circumſtances, could be the Riſe or Original of ſo ſhameful a Contrivance. When *Nero* therefore began to Perſecute Chriſtians, at the ſame time, we may ſuppoſe, began *Simon Magus*, who was then at *Rome*, to contrive how he might beſt ſecure his Diſciples from forſaking him upon that Occaſion. In order to which, he taught them openly to deny the Faith, and if need ſhould be, to Worſhip Idols alſo. For thus much *Origen* in his Book againſt *Celſus*, does after this manner Teſtifie concerning him; *That tho' Simon deceived many, yet from Death and Capital Puniſhment, which other Chriſtians ſo freely underwent, for the ſake of their Religion, he took care to reſcue every one of his Followers, by teaching them to carry themſelves indifferently as to the Worſhip of Idols.*

Acts 2 4 Exp 104 M.O

Among the other nameleſs Multitude of deluded Wretches, who followed this grand Deceiver, St. *Irenæus* has given us a particular Catalogue of ſome of his more chief Diſciples, in thoſe black Names of *Menander*, *Saturninus*, *Baſilides*, *Carpocrates*, *Cerinthus*, *Ebion*, *Nicholaus*, *Cerdon*, and *Marcion*, who all, not only themſelves, embraced and followed, but alſo, ſetting up for Maſters of Sects, moſt induſtriouſly propagated among others all the ſame pernicious Errours, and that too in particular under our preſent Conſideration. *Euſebius* expreſly tells us of *Baſilides*, *That he taught it to be a matter of Indifference, not only to eat of the Sacrifices offered unto Idols, but alſo boldly to deny, and even forſwear the Faith in time of Perſecution.* The ſame *Euſebius* likewiſe informs us concerning *Elxai*, who had been a chief Leader of the Sect of the *Oſſens*, and at laſt joined himſelf to the Party of *Ebion*, that he not only delivered the ſame Doctrine to his Diſciples, but furniſhed them alſo with theſe doughty Arguments, to maintain the ſame: For, ſaith he, *The* Helceſaitæ *affirm, That it is therefore no Sin at all to deny Chriſt in the time of Perſecution, becauſe he who is fixed in his Heart, tho' he denies him with his Mouth, in a Caſe of Neceſſity, does yet with his Heart continue ſteadfaſt in the Faith. Upon which account* (they ſay) *that ſuch a one, ſo denying with his Mouth, is guilty of no Sin; ſince God regards the Heart much rather than the Tongue.*

Euſeb. Hiſt. *l.* 4. *c.* 7.

Euſeb. l. 6. *c.* 28.

I ſhall not now go about to confute or diſcover the Fallaſie or Weakneſs of theſe pretended Reaſons; but reſerving this Task to a more proper Place, proceed rather to ſhew how juſtly infamous and deteſted the Heads of this curſed Sect were in the Judgment of the true Doctors and main Pillars of the Chriſtian Church. When that eminent Martyr and Biſhop of *Smyrna*, the renowned *Polycarp*, who had alſo been a Diſciple of St. *John*, happened, being then at *Rome*, to meet with the Heretick *Marcion*, and was ask'd by him after a fawning manner, whether or no he acknowledged him? His Anſwer was, (like that of *Ignatius* to *Simon*) *I acknowledge thee*, ſaith he, *to be the Firſt-born of Satan.*

Cerinthus, (as *Epiphanius* affirms) was one of thoſe who murmured againſt St. *Peter*, and reſiſted him for going in to *Cornelius* a Perſon uncircumciſed; tho' expreſly commanded to do ſo from Heaven. And both *Irenæus* and *Euſebius* relate concerning St. *John* himſelf, that when he was going to bath himſelf, and had heard that *Cerinthus* was there, preſently he cried out, *let us be gone hence, leaſt we periſh with him.* And tho' *Epiphanius* particularly applies this to *Ebion*, yet both theſe Authors may be well enough conſiſtent in this Matter, ſince both thoſe Hereticks might probabily be at that time there together, who were obſerved to have been very ſeldom or never aſunder. Nor is it at all to be wondred at, that thoſe Peſts of Chriſtianity ſhould be ſo abominable to the true Apoſtles and Apoſtolical Men, ſince by the other enormities of their Behaviour, as well as by their join-

joining indifferently upon occaſion in all ſorts of Religions, they had rendred the Chriſtian Name it ſelf ſo odious in the ſight of many of the very Heathen, who happening to be leſs acquainted with the true nature of it, ſtood perfectly aſtoniſhed at the unaccountable Levity of theſe Men. For according to their Doctrine, ſo likewiſe was the Converſation and Behaviour of all theſe *Gnoſtick* Sects in general; who ſcrupled not in the leaſt, to Communicate in Worſhip either with Chriſtians, Jews, or Pagans, nor to ſay or do, to profeſs or deny any thing, in order to their Carcaſs preſervation, and that they might keep themſelves in a whole Skin. Upon this very occaſion, perhaps *Flavius Vopiſcus*, in the Life of *Saturninus*, produceth out of the Hiſtory of *Phlegon*, an entire Epiſtle of the Emperour *Adrian* to *Servianus* the Conſul; in which, ſpeaking of the wonderful Inconſtancy of ſome Chriſtians, he affirms of them, *That ſometimes they uſed to Worſhip* Serapis, *with the* Egyptians, *ſometimes Chriſt, and ſometimes one God with the* Jews, *and ſometimes with the* Gentiles, Where (in the Opinion of *Baronius*) we are to take it for certain, that this is to be underſtood of thoſe Heretical Chriſtians who were of the School of *Baſilides* and *Carpocrates*, who were both *Alexandrians*, and there opening the School of all Impurities, were notorious for being neither firm nor conſtant in the Confeſſion of Chriſts Name, and for teaching their Followers, that they might, without any blame, deny him, and Worſhip the Gods of the *Gentiles*. Concerning the *Valentinians* alſo, who aſſociated themſelves to the *Gnoſticks*, *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* thus informs us; *That they held there was no Neceſſity of openly Confeſſing Chriſt, nor of ſuffering Martyrdom for the Chriſtian Religion; that they did eat of Meat offered to Idols, as a thing indifferent, not thinking themſelves to be at all polluted by ſo doing, or by any other Pagan Compliances, when there was occaſion. That they uſed upon the ſame account to revile the Orthodox Chriſtians, becauſe they made Conſcience of ſuch Matters, as mere Idiots and ſimple Perſons who underſtood nothing; vaunting of themſelves in the mean time, as the only knowing and perfect ones, and Veſſels of Election.*

And when this firſt Set of Diabolical Apoſtles were themſelves in time extinguiſhed, their deſtructive Principle for ſome Ages afterwards ſtill ſurvived in their Impious Succeſſors. For *Priſcillian* under the Reign of the Emperours *Gratian* and *Valentinian*, Compoſing one Heretical Monſter from the ſeveral Madneſſes of the *Manichæans* and *Gnoſticks* joined together, among ſeveral other horrid Doctrines, delivered, *That it was lawful to Lye, and to Diſſemble, for the avoiding of Sufferings; that the Truth was then to be retained in a Mans Heart only; whilſt the Confeſſion of the Mouth was requiſite to be made only before Neighbours and Friends, and not before Strangers.* But the Emperour *Theodoſius* (as I ſhall more largely relate hereafter) well nigh put an end to this diſſembling and moſt perfidious Sect, by ſetting forth, and pun-

punctually Executing the moſt ſevere Edicts againſt them, as Enemies to Humane Society it ſelf, no leſs than to all Religion in general. So that for a long time afterwards, (if I miſtake not) very few or none could be found, who durſt openly profeſs or propogate this Doctrine of Diſſimulation. For tho' it is not to be queſtioned, but that almoſt every Age and Place can produce many Perſons who may have prevailed with themſelves outwardly to comply with ſuch a ſort of Worſhip, as with which, at the ſame time, they could by no means inwardly join and heartily agree, and ſo have been ſelf Condemned in the very Action; yet, I think, but few for ſome Ages before us, have had the Confidence avowedly to maintain, or publickly to juſtifie the ſo doing. Till now of late with us, (to the ſhame, and I fear, the utter confuſion too of this our native Country) there unhappily ſprang up one, of Fore-head enough, openly to revive, even in Print, this buried and forgotten Doctrine of thoſe who have ſo long ſince dwelt with Devils, for their deſerved recompence. The Man, I mean, is no other than that great Father of our Modern Atheiſts, the execrable Author of the *Leviathan*, who in that helliſh Volume, like a true Caſuiſt of *Lucifer*, thus ſtates the Queſtion, and returns the Anſwer to it, by moſt ſhamefully abuſing this very Text. *If it be asked*, ſaith he, *What if we be commanded by our lawful Prince to ſay, That we do not believe, muſt we obey him, or no?* He Anſwers, *That a Chriſtian Man, in matters of this Nature, if he does but believe on Chriſt in his Heart, has the ſame liberty which the Prophet* Eliſha *granted to* Naaman *the* Syrian. Naaman *was converted to the God of* Iſrael *in his Heart, and ſaid,* 2 Kin. 5. 17. *&c.* Naaman *here believed with his Heart in the true God; but by his outward Worſhip deſired to ſeem, as if he had not believed, leaſt he ſhould offend his King.*

Lev. c. 42. p. 234.

To all which, I need ſay no more at preſent, but that you have heard of the Man and his Communication. Who, tho' he be gone ſometime ago *to his own Place*, or (as himſelf is ſaid to have Worded it when dying) into the dark Abyſs, has yet alſo left behind him, as but too many more ſecret Diſciples here, ſo one in another Country, who ſeems, (as if he were his eldeſt Son) to have taken Poſſeſſion of all his *Ills*, and to have become (among the reſt of his admirable Qualities) Inheritour alſo of his haughty Spirit and ſingular Impudence. For the learned *Puffendorff*, in a late Treatiſe of his Intituled, THE NATURE OF RELIGION IN REFERENCE TO CIVIL SOCIETY, informs us of one *Adrian Hutuyn*, a Civilian in *Holland*, who in a Book called A POLITICAL EPITOMY, among many other wild Extravagancies, has, as to this Point alſo, exactly Copied after the *Leviathan*. But I ſhall forbear producing any particulars, or making any farther Remarks upon this Author; It being enough for my preſent purpoſe, only to obſerve thus much, *viz.* That his very choice of ſuch a *Maſter*, is a plain Indication

of

of the Temper and Inclinations of the Scholar. And ſince we hereby know, what kind of Spirit he is of, this alone may ſuffice to enable us to give his Writings alſo a ſuitable Entertainment.

And indeed, (as I ſaid at firſt) had we no other Arguments to prevail upon us, methinks we ſhould be ſufficiently ſecured from the danger of this Infection, by the meer Horrour and Extreme Prejudice, which we may juſtly conceive, whilſt we conſider the notorious ill Characters of the ſeveral Authors and Promoters of this Doctrine, whoſe bare Names ſet over it, ſhould, methinks, be at the ſame time, both a ſufficient diſtinguiſhing Title to the Poiſon, and conſequently, in ſome Reſpect, a very good Antidote too: Since what elſe but miſchief can be expected from the ſo known Enemies of Chriſtianity and all Religion, and whoſe Behaviour, in all other Points as well as this, was ſo very unlike to that of thoſe, who any way deſerved the Name of Chriſtians?

Which is the Second thing I ſhall now Conſider, *viz.*

CHAP. VIII.

How quite contrary was the Example of our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf, and his Apoſtles, as well as the Practiſe of all the genuine Primitive Chriſtians.

NOW as to the Example of that great Author and Finiſher of our Faith, our ever Bleſſed Saviour, he expreſly declares of himſelf, *To this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the World, that I ſhould bear Witneſs unto the Truth.* Which end and deſign of his, he fully made good and executed to the laſt, by laying down his moſt precious Life, upon that very Account, whilſt he *Witneſſed that excellent Confeſſion before Pontius Pilate*, ſpoken of by the Apoſtle; upon which he received his Sentence of Condemnation. And what was that Truth, and that Confeſſion? No other than what is the very Foundation of all Chriſtianity, and at the ſame time, ſo ſhamefully denyed by our *Socinians*, who yet have the Face to call themſelves Chriſtians; *viz.* That he was the true Meſſiah, or really GOD-MAN. For upon his aſſerting this grand Truth; *That he and his Father were one*, the *Jews* took up Stones to Stone him, and directly Charge him with Blaſ-

John 18. 37.

1 Tim. 6. 13.

Blaſphemy, in that *he being*, (as they ſuppoſed) *a meer Man, made himſelf God*; as we find, *John* 10. 30. 31. 33. And ſo *Mat.* 26. 63. When the High-Prieſt, with the *Jewiſh* Sanhedrim ſitting in Judgment on him, *had adjured him by the living God, to tell them, whether or no he was the Chriſt, the Son of God*, Jeſus anſwered him, *THOU HAST SAID*, that is, Thou haſt hit on the very Truth, or, I am really the Son of God.

Which he alſo immediately farther confirms, with a Threatning infinitely more terrible than Thunder and Lightning, or Ten thouſand Earthquakes, enough to have daſhed them into a Fit of Trembling and Conſternation, far beyond that of *Belſhazzar* himſelf, when he ſaw the Hand-writing upon the Wall: For it follows, *Nevertheleſs, I ſay unto you, Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son of Man, ſitting on the Right hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* Where this Word, [*Nevertheleſs*] does not immediately relate to any thing either before, or afterwards expreſſed, but to ſomething that is to be ſupply'd, or underſtood: As if he had ſaid; Notwithſtanding, or Although I very well know, that you will not now believe this my Confeſſion; yet hereafter, to your unconceivable Sorrow and Confuſion, you ſhall be fully Convinced of the Truth thereof, whether you will or no, when you ſhall ſee, (as moſt certainly you ſhall ſee) me coming in all the Majeſty of Heaven, to Judge the World. And here now, (begging a little Digreſſion from my Subject) I cannot forbear adding, That thoſe Perſons, who after the Advantage of ſuch powerful Arguments, (which the *Jews* at that time wanted) towards the Confirmation of this Truth, by Chriſts Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, and ſending of the Holy-Ghoſt, and by the ſo ſudden, and miraculous Propagation of the Goſpel all the World over, can yet find in their Hearts to deny, and even deride the real Divinity of our Saviour, are far more inexcuſable than the very *Jews* themſelves; muſt in their Hearts think him, and do by Conſequence no other, than call him (I tremble to think of it) a meer Liar and Deceiver: They do in effect agree with the *Jews*, in their Charge of Blaſphemy againſt him, juſtifie their Actions, in his Condemnation and Crucifixion; and would in all probability, (whatſoever they may think to the contrary) have readily joyned with them in the ſame, had they but Lived in their Time and Circumſtances.

But I return to my proper Buſineſs in hand, by next Conſidering, How well the Apoſtles alſo, followed this Example of their great Maſter, in not diſſembling the Truth, nor being aſhamed of the Goſpel, nor terrified from the open Confeſſion of their Faith upon all occaſions, notwithſtanding all the Dangers and Threatnings, that might have prevailed upon them to the contrary. And indeed had we no other Evidences to this purpoſe, our bare Obſervation,

that

that the World is not ſtill *Pagan*, as the greateſt Atheiſt cannot deny, but that it once was ſo; that we now have, or know any thing of the Goſpel, this alone of it ſelf, is an undeniable Proof, and even a ſenſible Demonſtration of that matter. Since all this, under God, muſt needs be wholly owing to the undaunted Courage and Conſtancy of thoſe firſt Planters, without whoſe Light and faithful Preaching of the Word, we muſt ſtill have continued to ſit in Darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of Death. So, that even the greateſt Infidels in all other Points, muſt yet from the viſible effects thereof, eaſily enough give Credit to thoſe particular Relations of the Goſpel, concerning the Apoſtles Behaviour of this kind; *viz.* That being firſt Beaten, and Impriſoned for Preaching Chriſt, and afterwards, ſtrictly charged by the Rulers, that they ſhould no more ſpeak to the People of that Name, they boldly anſwered; * *Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye, For we cannot but ſpeak the things which we have heard and ſeen.* And ſo when ſome of the Brethren endeavoured to diſſwade St. *Paul* from his intended Journey to *Jeruſalem*, in proſpect of the imminent Dangers that would there attend him, his Anſwer was; * *What mean ye to weep and to break my Heart? For I am ready not to be Bound only, but alſo to Die at Jeruſalem, for the Name of the Lord Jeſus.* And what the ſame Apoſtle affirms of himſelf, was no leſs true concerning all the reſt of his Collegues: *That they did not ſhun to declare to the People, all the Counſel of God.* One ſingle Inſtance indeed to the contrary of this, we find in St. *Peter*, even after our Saviours Reſurrection, who at one time ſo behaved himſelf, as if he deſigned to be thought of another Judgment than really he was, for Fear of, or to curry Favour with the *Judaiſing* Chriſtians: For which Action, notwithſtanding he was moſt ſeverely Reprehended by St. *Paul*, as he himſelf has given us thereof the particular Relation, *Gal.* 2. 11. &c. Where he expreſly tells us, that upon this Account he withſtood him to the Face, as one greatly to be Blamed for ſuch Diſſimulation, and not walking uprightly according to the Truth of the Goſpel. But abating this ſingle Example, ſo far were they from any way concealing the Truth, or diſſembling their Belief, that the Conſideration of their having Acted quite otherwiſe, was matter of their greateſt Joy and Comfort, whilſt St. *Paul* ſpeaking in the Name of all the reſt, aſſures us, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Our rejoycing is this, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity, and godly Sincerity, we have had our Converſation in the World.* Which indeed, is ſo true a Character of their Demeanour in general, that for conſtantly thus Acting and Profeſſing, they were all at laſt, at ſeveral Times and Places, put to ſeveral Deaths, by their *Heathen* Perſecutors: St. *John* alone excepted, who yet ſuffering Baniſhment, and a Thouſand other living Deaths; ſhined Bright

* Acts. 4. 19, 20.

* Acts, 21. 13.

Bright to the very laſt, in all the Glories of a moſt Triumphant Confeſſour.

But did not then (may you ſay) this Couragious Temper of ſuch admirable Zeal and Conſtancy, and undiſguis'd Simplicity, did it not at length expire and die with thoſe firſt Twelve moſt renowned Chriſtian Worthies? No no, by no means; It ſtill ſurvived for ſome Ages afterwards, in the glorious Names, and ſuitable Converſations, of thoſe holy Biſhops and Martyrs, St. *Clemens*, St. *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, *Juſtin*, *Irenæus*, *Cyprian*; and in the numerous Train, and long Succeſſion of other leading Officers in the Noble Army of Martyrs. From whence I ſhall ſingle out, and chuſe a little more largely to Relate ſome few Examples of latter Date, which, tho' perhaps they may be leſs known than the before mentioned, are yet no leſs Remarkable, nor leſs to my preſent purpoſe.

That good Biſhop of *Tagaſte*, a City in *Africa*, not far from *Hippo*, *Firmus* by Name, but much more firm in Reſolution, ſo much was he in Love with Truth, and Chriſtian Simplicity, and ſo far from that moſt hainous Lie of denying his Faith, that he was ready to Die, mch rather than to be induced to tell that which is called an officious Lie only. For when Officers ſent by the Emperour, for that end had enquired of him, concerning a certain Perſon, whom he had conceal'd with all the Care he could, he moſt ingenuouſly anſwered them, *That he could neither tell a Lie, nor yet betray the Man*: And thus conſtantly perſiſting in the ſame Reſolution, after all the Torments they could invent to make him Suffer, they brought him at length to the Emperour, to receive from him his final Doom.

Now what ſhall we think of this Action? I know very well, what Cenſure ſome, who paſs for Chriſtians, would readily give of it: But let us hear, I pray, what was the Judgment of the Emperour himſelf in this Caſe, who was no other than a *Pagan*: But yet ſo extremely taken with the admirable Candour, Fidelity and Courage, of this ſo extraordinary Behaviour, that he not only preſently diſcharged *Firmus* himſelf; but for his ſake, freely Pardoned the Perſon alſo, whom the Biſhop had ſo concealed; * as *Auguſtine* gives us the Relation.

* *Aug.* lib. de Mendacio.

Again, what ſhall we ſay to the wonderful Zeal, and undiſguiſed Simplicity, of *Mark* Biſhop of *Arethuſa*? Who choſe rather to be miſerably Tormented to Death by the Rabble, than either Rebuild, (as he was Commanded by *Julian*) or give the leaſt

leaſt Sum himſelf, or ſuffer others, who ſo offered to do it for him, towards the Rebuilding of the Heathen-Temple.

In like manner, *Anthony*, an *Arian* Biſhop, after he was able by no exquiſiteneſs of Torments, to bring *Habetdeus*, an Orthodox Biſhop, over to the Profeſſion of his own impious Sect, at laſt, ſtopping his Mouth, and binding his Hands and Feet, he by force Plunged him into the Bath of Re-babtization, which he had prepared for that purpoſe. And then afterwards endeavoured to perſwade him, that by this Waſhing he was made a Companion and Partaker with him of the ſame Hereſie: But the good Biſhop, by a conſtant Confeſſion, moſt Couragiouſly denyed it, ſaying; O *wicked* Anthony! *That can be no Condemnation unto Death, where the Aſſent of the Will is wanting, I, moſt tenacious of my Faith, did, as long as ever I had the Opportunity, lowdly defend, and with my Voice confeſs the things which I did and do believe: But after you had Bound me with Chains, and ſtopping my Mouth, took away from me the Faculty of Speaking; I then tranſmitted the more ſecret Confeſſion of my Faith, kept within the Cloſet of my Breaſt, as well as the monſtrous Acts of that your Violence againſt me, to be both of them read by my bleſſed Saviour, the holy Angels themſelves alſo therein Subſcribing to me.*

Admirable likewiſe was the Example of *Eulogius*, a Presbyter of the Church of *Corduba*, who being drag'd upon the Account of his Religion, before the chief Counſellours of a *Mahometan* King, was by one of them with whom he had been familiarly acquainted, after this manner Subtily, but yet (as the Man meant it) compaſſionately Accoſted: *That Fools and Ideots* (ſaith he) *ſhould run themſelves upon Death and Ruin, is a thing not ſo much to be wondered at: But as for you, who are a Man ſo adorned, with all the Accompliſhments of Wisdom, and approved for the Honeſty of your Converſation, What Madneſs is it that forces you thus to fling your ſelf into this lamentable Condition? Hearken, I beſeech you to my Counſel, and do not obſtinately run upon your own Deſtruction. Deny only by one ſmall Word, now in this your Hour of Neceſſity, and then afterwards, whereſoever you can do it ſafely, freely exerciſe and enjoy your own Faith. We Promiſe you, that you ſhall no where be ever ſought after.*

To whom, the holy Man, (a little Smiling) thus reply'd: O *that you could but know, how glorious Things are prepared for the ſincere Worſhipers that are of our Religion! Or that I could but once convey into yours, what I retain and feel in my own Breaſt, then would you be ſo far from endeavouring to recall me from my purpoſe, that your Thoughts would be wholly taken up, about how you might beſt* with- Alvari Hiſt. citante Baronio. An. Vol. 10. p. 161.]

withdraw your ſelf from this deceitful Worldly Honour. And ſo he began to Preach to them the word of Life: But they refuſing to hear the ſame, preſently commanded him to be run thorow with a Sword.

Nor let any one Object againſt the already produced Inſtances, (as ſome have done upon the like occaſion) That all theſe are Examples only of Biſhops and other publick Miniſters of the Chriſtian Church; upon whom (they are ready to grant) there does lie ſome Obligation, in point of Credit as well as Intereſt, to chuſe to ſuffer rather than deny or diſſemble their Belief: And to this purpoſe, the zealous Diſciples even of that grand Atheiſtical Patron, whom I had occaſion not long ago to mention, have thought fit to treaſure up this in Print among the reſt of his (ſuppoſed) witty poſthumous Sayings, *viz. That none ought ſo juſtly to Die for their Religion, as they that Live by it.* Whereas, may they ſay, there is not the ſame Reaſon, that private Chriſtians ſhould be thus obliged; nor is it eaſy, perhaps, amongſt them, to produce the like Examples. Now to obviate this Objection, as well as in regard of the great natural Uſefulneſs of ſuch Precedents, to promote in others the like Zeal and Conſtancy, I ſhall think it worth the while, to give you ſtill ſome farther Variety of the like Behaviour in all Sorts and Degrees of other Chriſtian Profeſſors. Concerning whom in general, *Juſtin* Martyr, gives us this ample Teſtimony, *That they can never endure ſo much as to ſeem to Worſhip an Idol*; ἀλλὰ πᾶσαν ἀνίαν καὶ ζημωείαν μέχρις ἐχάτε θανάτε ὑπομιμένουσι πρὸ τῦ μήτε εἰδωλολατρῆσαι, μήτε εἰδωλόθυτα φαγῖν, *but ſuffer all kind of Torments and Puniſhments even to the very laſt efforts of Death, rather than either Worſhip Idols, or eat of any thing Offered thereto.* And ſtill in his ſecond Apology to the Chriſtians, he thus deſcribes the Chriſtians of his Time; *We who formerly before our Converſion, uſed to employ our ſelves in Butchering one another, do now not only not reſiſt our Enemies, but, rather than tell a Lye, or deceive even thoſe who inform againſt us, willingly confeſs Chriſt, to the loſs of our very Lives: Whereas, (would our Conſciences permit) we might, (as well as you Heathen are wont to do) make uſe of, and behave our ſelves according to your uſual Proverb; Swear with our Tongues, remaining ſtill unſworn in your Minds.*

Juſt. Mart. in Dial. cum Tryph. Jud.

Ἡ γλῶσσ' ὀμώμοχ' ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος.

But deſcending now to particulars, with whom can I better begin, or more agreeably place in the fore Front, than that noble and couragious Soldier *Valentinian* the Elder? Afterwards Emperour of *Rome*; but at that time an Officer only in the Army of the Emperour *Julian*, who was ſo far from doing

ing or ſuffering any thing which might give any juſt occaſion of his being thought to comply with the Heatheniſh Superſtition, that he boldly ſtruck the *Ædile*, who had ſprinkled him with luſtral Water among the reſt, according to the Pagans Cuſtome, and cut out that part of his Garment, even in the ſight of *Julian* the Apoſtate.

After him ſhall follow, (tho' in time he went before him) another Chriſtian Soldier, called *Gordius*, of the City of *Ceſarea*, and no leſs magnanimous. Whoſe Perſecutors (as St. *Baſil* gives us the Hiſtory) after they could by no other means turn him aſide from the Faith, ſet upon him at laſt with ſome plauſible Arguments, perſuading him that he ſhould, if he had ſtill a mind, retain Chriſt in his Heart only, and with his Mouth deny him: *For God* (ſay the) *does not look upon Words, but upon the Mind it ſelf of the Speaker; This is the only way to appeaſe the angry Judge, and to keep God himſelf propitious too.* But he remaining firm and immovable, anſwered them after this manner; *I can by no means yield, to let that Tongue, the benefit of which is wholly owing to Chriſts Favour, ſo ſhamefully deny its Author. For with the Heart we believe unto Righteouſneſs, and with the Mouth we make Confeſſion unto Salvation. Do not err, God cannot be mocked Out of our own Mouthes he Judges, and from our Words he will either Save or Damn us. Did you never hear of that dreadful Sentence of our great Lord?* viz. *He that denieth me before Men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in Heaven,* &c. *You Counſel me, that I ſhould at preſent diſſemble the Knowledge which I have of God. Wherefore, I pray? Is it that I may prolong this Life, add to my Days, and while off the bitterneſs of Death? But ſhall I then be contented to looſe the Eternal Years of the heavenly Life? Shall I, to avoid a little preſent pain, forego forever that future Crown of Righteouſneſs and exceeding weight of Glory? Thus deliberately to chooſe to damn my ſelf, and by ſuch ſhameful Deceit and Fraud to purchaſe to my ſelf the Eternal Torments of Hell, can be no other than down right Madneſs. Let me therefore rather give you this Advice; That if hitherto you have been miſtaken, you would now at length learn Truth and Wiſdom; but if you diſſemble your Faith, and ſerve the preſent time, I earneſtly exhort and intreat you, that laying aſide Lying, you would boldly ſpeak the Truth: For every Tongue is to confeſs the Glory of Chriſt, as well as every Knee to bow at his Name.*

Baſil Hom. in Mart.

After theſe two great Leaders, I am ſtill enabled to preſent to your view, all at once, a whole little Army of the ſame Profeſſion, who alſo ſhewed themſelves to be no leſs Chriſts faithful

faithful Soldiers. Tho' the Story be somewhat large, yet I shall give you it in full, with all its material and more considerable Circumstances, because the same will help us so much the better to understand both the great Subtilety of the Heathen to ensnare, and what was the chief thing they drove at, and how extreamly careful likewise the then Christians were, to avoid giving any just occasion of Scandal, and to abstain from all Appearance of Evil, especially in such tender Cases. Now *Julian* the Apostate being fully satisfied, by many fruitless Attempts of that kind, and Experiments so often in vain repeated, that nothing was to be done on the Christians, no prevailing upon them to comply with his Purpose, by the more common and open ways of down right Force or Threatnings, thought fit at last to betake himself to the courses of Fraud and Subtilety, to trap them, (if possible) as it were by way of Ambush or Surprize, and to overcome them by cunning Artifices and Contrivances. And accordingly, altering the Standards or Ensigns of the Emperour, which were before in use, caused to be expressed thereon, together with his own, the Images of the Pagan Gods; so that when his Christian Subjects came to signifie their Reverence thereto, (as 'twas both usual, and generally concluded Innocent, for them that way to shew their respect to the Emperour) they might be at the same time forced Ignorantly, or indeliberately to Worship, or at least seem to Worship the Pagan Idols also; or else be punished as Traitors and Contemners of him for their Refusal. Which yet very many (as soon as they discovered the Cheat) chose to do, and generously suffered for it accordingly. Again, when the set time came, that the Emperour should according to Customs, give Rewards to the Soldiers, this subtile Apostate, considering how Ignorant and simple a sort of Men Souldiers generally were, and by their covetous Temper, how easily overcome with Money, before hand instructed those whom he employed to dispense his Gifts, that, having both Fire and Frankincense in a readiness, they should command every one, as he came to receive his Donative, to cast in a peice of Frankincense, as if this had been formerly so ordered among all the *Romans* of old. But even upon this also many shewed a wonderful Magnanimity, utterly refusing both to offer, and to receive any gift from him. Others, trusting to the Pretences and colour of an old Law or Custom, did not in the least think themselves to have committed any Sin at all. While some again, taken with that bait of the proposed Gain, or astonished through fear of the ensuing Punishment, refused not even knowingly, to defile themselves with so great a Crime. But

soon

ſoon afterwards, when ſeveral of all theſe ſorts cōme Familiarly to converſe together, and ſome in drinking to each other, happened to name the name of Chriſt, one of the Company interrupted them ſaying, *That it ſeemed very ſtrange, that they ſhould now invocate Chriſt, whom they had ſo lately denied, when receiving the Emperour's Donative, they had caſt Franckinſenſe into the Fire.* Upon this, many of thoſe that had ignorantly offended taking the Alarm, and comming to underſtand what they had done, haſtily departed together; and running up and down the Streets with Tears and Outcries, openly called God and Man to Witneſs, that they are Chriſtians, and ſtill continue in the Faith; that out of mere Ignorance of what was done, their Hands alone, whilſt their Mind abhorred it, were polluted with the Pagan Superſtition. But when they came at laſt to the Emperour himſelf, throwing down the Gold he had given them, at his Feet, with conſtant courageous Minds, they entreat of him, *That they may now receive their own proper Gift belonging to them, that is, that they may ſuffer Death: For it was a Matter of which they ſhould never repent, if for the Crime they had ſo inconſiderately committed with the Hand they ſhould now be puniſhed in their whole Body for Chriſts ſake.* But *Julian*, tho' extremely troulbled at this, yet envying them the Honour of Martyrdom, would not put them to Death but Baniſhing them his Court, ſtruck them alſo out of the Liſt of Soldiers. *Sozom.* l. 5. c. 16.

Nor were Chriſtian Soldiers the only Perſons endued with ſuch Chriſtian Courage and Simplicity: The primitive times afforded many thouſands of all other ſorts, who willingly offered up their Lives a Sacrifice, and committed their Bodies to the Sword, to Racks, to Lions, to the Flames, rather than once caſt one Grain of Frankincenſe into the Fire of thoſe Altars. Among whom, though doubtleſs, very great is the number of the wholly unrecorded, and ſuch of whom there is now left no mention or Memory unto Poſterity; yet, I fear, you would be apt to think it ſomething like a little ſort of Martyrdom, were you obliged only to hear, or barely to read over all the Relations of this kind that are ſtill extant. Where we ſhall find all ſincere Chriſtians, at all times ready to undergo any kind of Death or Torment, rather than to offer to deny Chriſt themſelves, or ſo much as ſubſtitute or ſuffer any other to do either of then for theſe; rather than purchaſe a a falſe Certificate of the Judge concerning their having done this; nay, where any falſe Report was raiſed to that purpoſe, rather than not openly deny and contradict the ſame; in a Word,

rather

rather than to ſay or do, or be ſo ſilent, as might give any juſt occaſion of their ſeeming, or being thought to have complied with ſuch Sinful and Idolatrous Worſhip.

Very remarkable to this purpoſe is what St. *Baſil* relates, concerning one *Barlaham*, a very mean and illiterate Man, but yet moſt truly noble and admirable for his Chriſtian Courage, whom after the Heathen Perſecutors had firſt long and diverſe ways (but in vain) Tormented, for refuſing to Sacrifice; they at laſt endeavoured to circumvent him by this cunning Stratagem. Firſt they compel him to ſtretch out his right Hand, with the Palm upwards, over the Fire of their Altar, and then of a ſuddain poured into his Hand a quantity of flaming Frankincenſe, expecting that the extreme pain would naturally make him ſhake his Hand, to be rid of it, and with the ſame motion alſo ſhake ſome of the Franckincenſe into the Fire, and ſo look to thoſe who ſtood at a diſtance, as if he had voluntarily comply'd with them, in the uſe of that common Ceremony, by which they were accuſtomed to Worſhip their Idols. But this Chriſtian *Mutius* did not ſtir nor flinch one Jot; but, as if his Arm had been made of Braſs, and equally void both of Senſe and Motion, he ſuffered the flaming Matter to eat into his Hand, till it quite burnt out of it ſelf, rather than by the leaſt Motion ſpilling any particle on the Altar, he ſhould ſo be forced, but to ſeem therein to comply with them in the Idolatrous Ceremony.

Basil. Orat. in *Barla.*

And here now, leaſt any one in this caſe, ſhould groundleſly attribute, more than is convenient either to the particular Temper of the Man, or to the advantage of his Sex, I ſhall add hereto one parallel Inſtance, even of a Woman, who upon the ſame occaſion, and under the ſame Tryal, ſhewed her ſelf no leſs Triumphant. For *Cyrilla*, who ſuffered at *Cyrene* in *Egypt*, is certainly worthy of eternal Memory. Who, under the Perſecution of *Maximinus*, having had hot burning Coals mixed with Franckincenſe, placed upon her Hand, moſt ſteadfaſtly held them there in like manner for a long time together, leaſt, by the ſlighteſt Motion ſhaking down any thereof, ſhe might ſeem to have offered to the Idol. And ſo ſhe was afterwards cruelly torn in Peices.

Baron An. v. 3. p. 54.

After

After these Examples now, what shall we say or think of those Men, who, more delighting themselves in the newer name of *Protestants*, than in that of *Christians*, do also, upon the like occasions, allow themselves the Liberty of a new, and indeed quite contrary behaviour to all these venerable Precedents? I speak of those Persons among us, who, travelling into foraign Countries out of no absolute Necessity neither, but only to encrease their Wealth, or, perhaps, merely for their Pleasure and Recreation; yet when they are once there, rather than incur any considerable danger, which their own folly too first brought them to encounter with; it may be, rather than suffer a small Affront; Nay, sometimes, rather than not satisfy their vain Curiosity; can afford to cringe, and bow, and kiss, or do any thing else with the outward Man, that they know will be thought a Complyance; nay, on set purpose, that they may seem and be thought actually to comply with such Practices, as they are fully perswaded at the same time to be sinful, and even Idolatrous, and of which they pretend to have really an utter abhorrence in their Hearts.

But some mens *new Light*, and *new Faith* too, quite void of *old Patience*, and far more truly called Presumption, may (it's likely enough) enbolden them to endeavour to justify themselves, by condemning all these unfashionable Examples, as the rash and indiscreet Actions of private persons, who had more Zeal than Knowledge, and went, upon their own heads, much farther than they were any way really obliged to. Whereas (may they object) did your Bishops and publick Governours of the Church, who understood the Christian Duty, did they require any such strictness from all Believers? Or did they not rather indeed, in their publick Councils and Canons, allow some greater Liberties unto common Christians? Which brings me to a third Consideration, *viz.*

CHAP. IX.

How generally condemned they are by the publick Canons, and what severe Censures the Primitive Church passed and inflicted upon Time-servers and Dissemblers of their Faith.

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WHere we may observe, that tho' it was the main Care and Study of those antient Worthies, how they might best perfect and keep up an exact Discipline in the Church, without which (as they wisely considered) it had been wholly impossible that Christianity should have long subsisted under the then Circumstances; yet we shall likewise find, that they very well knew also how to temper their Severities with Mildness, granting all reason.

5 Anne 8 § 11 N 1 Christianity was not Propagated by Discipline after the manner of men but by the Reflection & meditation upon the Resurrection itself which is the principle that Every Christian is to relye upon which needs no other Instruction but a Rationall affection to Imbrace truth which unless devoutfully managed can not want the Grace of God

sonable and convenient Liberties, and sometimes abating of some Rigors upon a just Occasion, and shortening the allotted time of Punishments, as they judged it most conducive to the good of the Penitents themselves, or necessary (according to different circumstances) towards the Advantage and Edification of the Church in general.

To flie in the time of Persecution, (as well it might, our Saviour himself advising thereto) was a Liberty allowed by all Universally, *Tertullian* only excepted, who, after carried away with the Error of the *Montanists*, rigidly deny'd the Lawfulness thereof: But was utterly condemned for his so doing, by all others of the Orthodox Church in general. Who also, when they saw it most expedient, (like St. *Cyprian*, for a while) freely made use of that Liberty, no less to the commendation of their own Prudence, than to the benefit and advantage of the Christian Commonwealth. Nor did those holy and Wise conductors require, that any should, when uncalled upon, needlesly, and of their own accord offer themselves up as Christians to the *Pagan* Magistrates, but rather discouraged and forbad this practice, as arguing a zeal too Intemperate, and savouring of Rashness and Presumption. To which purpose St. [a] *Cyprian* expressly thus adviseth: *Let none of you unnecessarily and of his own accord present himself to the Gentiles: But being apprehended and delivered up to them, he ought then courageously to speak, what the Lord shall in that hour direct him to; Qui nos confiteri magis voluit, quam profiteri, Who would have us to confess only, rather than so profess.*

[a] St. Cyprian Epist. 83.

They in like manner generally concluded it not unlawful, that a Christian Man, (making use of the Covetousness of his Judge, to defeat his Cruelty) should purchase his safety by a Summ of Money, provided it was merely so obtained, without his otherwise saying or doing any thing dishonourable to or inconsistent with his Profession. Tho' indeed the Council of *Eliberis* (the most severe of any) did pass some Censure even upon such Persons.

But then as to the Case of those commonly called by the Antients *Libellatici*, who, tho' they had neither deny'd nor sacrificed, yet purchased of the Magistrates a false Certificate concerning their having done either of these, and kept and produced the same for their security upon occasion, all the Primitive Bishops no less than [b] St. *Cyprian*, are justly most severe in their Condemnation.

[b] Cyprian *lib. de Lapsis.*

The punishment they allotted to Idolaters, or those who deny'd the Faith, was to be cast out from the Communion of the Church; to be forbidden the Assemblies of the Faithful; To be obliged to extraordinary Fastings; To prostrate themselves at the feet of those who went in at the Church Porch; To acknowledge themselves cast out as Salt that had lost its Savour; To beg their Prayers with Tears and Lamentation; and to exercise many other Acts of Humility and Mortification, for several years together, more or less, according to different

ferent Times and Places, as well as the different manners and circumſtances of their Offending. In the *Roman* and *African* Churches there was a time when they never admitted them to Peace, who, after Baptiſm, had once lapſed into Idolatry: And when afterwards they did conſent to ſome Relaxion, yet even then they were never reconciled to the Church, till either they lay upon their Death-beds, or had ſuffered a very long and rigorous Penance. Nor did they ever think fit to impoſe this courſe of Repentance any more than once; For whoſoever relapſed a ſecond time, could never be re-admitted to Church Communion, but was to expect his pardon from God alone.

The [c] Council of *Eliberis* or *Elvira* forbids Chriſtians, not only to aſcend the Capital, in order to Sacrifice thereon, but even at a diſtance, ſo much as to behold that *Pagan* Worſhip, inflicting no leſs than ten years Penance upon ſuch Offenders.

[c] 59. *Canon. Concil. Elib. apud Du Pin. v. 1. p. 244.*

The ſeventh Canon of the Councils of *Ancyra* and *Neocæſarea* impoſed two years Penance upon thoſe, who were preſent at the Feaſts, made in Honour of the Idols, tho' they carried their own Meat thither, not eating of any thing that had been ſo offered.

In the year 306. *Peter* the renowned Martyr and Biſhop of *Alexandria*, together with the reſt of the Biſhops of the *Eaſt*, made ſeveral Canons, adjuſting the Puniſhments of thoſe, who had lapſed in the time of Perſecution: Some of which more immediately relating to my preſent purpoſe, I ſhall think it very well worth my while to ſet down here at large, as I find them recorded in the Annals of [d] *Baronius*. And this the rather, becauſe, both in regard of the great Variety of Caſes with which we are thereby acquainted, as well as in reſpect of their ſingular Wiſdom, thorrowly conſidering the differences of caſes, and allotting accordingly different Penalties, by a moſt juſt Severity, tempered with due Moderation, they ſeem to be as remarkable as any thing of this kind that is to be found in all the Treaſures of Antiquity.

[d] *Annal. Baron. vol. 2 p. 792.*

As for thoſe (*ſaith he*) *who counterfeited and diſſembled* (*like David, who to ſave his Life, feigned himſelf frantick, when he was far from being ſo*) *and did not down-right ſubſcribe to the denial of Chriſt; but being in great ſtraits, and endued with weaker Underſtandings, were, like fooliſh Children, deceived into the Snares of the Enemy; as more particularly, thoſe Perſons who only pretended that they had offered unto Idols, or that they had approached their Altars, or given up their names, or elſe had ſent Pagans to offer in their ſtead; becauſe, with the greateſt Caution, they avoided either with their own hands to carry the fire, or to perfume with Incenſe thoſe impure Damons, as well as, becauſe it is not certain, whether or no they might not do, even what they did, out of mere Ignorance; Let it be ſufficient to impoſe upon ſuch only, ſix Months Penance of Converſion.*

Then in the 6th Canon, as to the Cauſe of thoſe, who, (as he obſerves) had ſent their Slaves, tho' Chriſtians alſo, to offer for them, or any thing of the like nature that was required; He makes this diffe-

rance in the Puniſhment to be inflicted on theſe different Perſons, viz. *Let the Servants, who, as being in ſubjection, and in a ſort under the Cuſtody and Authority of their Maſters, and perhaps terrify'd by their Threatnings, might be forced through the dread of them ſo to tranſgreſs; Let them continue in the Works of Penance for one year only; from henceforth learning as the Servants of Chriſt to do his Will, and to fear him above All, being aſſured that whatſoever good any one does, that ſhall he receive at his hands, whether he be Bond or Free. But then as for the Maſters, who were free and at their own diſpoſal, let them undergo ſevere Penances for no leſs than three years together; as well, becauſe they groſly diſſembled themſelves, as becauſe they (in a manner) compelled their Servants ſo to tranſgreſs.*

The ſame *Peter* of *Alexandria* does there perfectly acquit thoſe (as well he might) into whoſe mouths meats ſacrificed to Idols, were forcibly thruſt, as thoſe alſo who were ſerved, as in the former caſe of *Baraham*, tho' they might not bear the Tryal in all Circumſtances with the ſame Courage.

But beſides this uſual one of Excommunication, and the reſt beforementioned, the Antients alſo invented, and frequently impoſed upon ſuch Delinquents another very adequate and ingenious Puniſhment; which too, in my Opinion, was not leſs ſevere in its kind, than any of the former, tho' perhaps leſs taken notice of under that Notion. For 'twas a common thing with the Primitive Biſhops, to oblige thoſe who had lapſed, by either denying or diſſembling the Faith, before they could be reconciled to the Church, to make frequent Viſits to the Confeſſors that were detained in Priſon, and there, in the moſt humble manner, to beg their Pardon, againſt whom they had ſo notoriouſly offended, in ſhamefully denying what the other had ſo couragiouſly confeſſed; and to intreat them likewiſe to interceed for them. Which certainly (if well conſidered) muſt needs be no ſmall ſort of Mortification, for thoſe who had cloathed themſelves with Shame, and were all over polluted with the deformities of ſo ignominious a Denial, ſo much, as even to behold the dazling Countenances of them, who ſhined out ſo bright in the full Luſtre of a moſt glorious Confeſſion. And how much more confounded then muſt we needs ſuppoſe them, at the juſt Reproofs which they would hear from them? What better way could there ever have been invented, more effectually to Conſult either the Glory and Dignity of the Confeſſors, or the real Benefit and Advantage of the lapſed? Who were by this means, in a manner forced, as men overcome, to proſtrate themſelves at the feet of their Conquerours, and with the loweſt Humility and Submiſſion of Mind, firſt to qualify themſelves for, and then to procure the Peace of the Church, by the prevailing Prayers of ſuch powerful Interceſſors. But yet that which was firſt introduced as a very good Remedy, was, by humane Perverſneſs and Iniquity, at length converted into no ſmall Diſtemper; whilſt the lapſed, quite deſpiſing both the Biſhop and all his Presbyters, of their own accord, betook them-

themſelves to the Martyrs, and having firſt extorted from them ſuch petitionary Letters concerning Peace, looked then upon it, as a perfect Debt, abſolutely owing to the Prayers of the Martyrs, and thereupon peremptorily required, rather than requeſted to be received to the Communion of the Church.

Concerning all the particulars of which Abuſes, we may be fully informed from ſeveral paſſages in the Writings of St. *Cyprian*; who alſo diligently endeavoured to correct the ſame. Such now was the prudent Care and Diligence of Eccleſiaſtical Governnours in the firſt Centuries of Chriſtianity, by all the means imaginable to hinder Men from denying, or diſſembling, or any ways being aſhamed of the Faith.

And indeed ſomething of the like Care and Diſcipline ſtill continued upon occaſion, for ſome Ages afterwards. For when *Gundebald*, King of *Burgundy*, had been convinced by *Alcinus* Biſhop of *Vienna*, concerning the *Arian* Hereſy, and to acknowledge the true Orthodox Faith; but yet, out of fond Shame, joyned with ſome politick ends, endeavouring to diſſemble and conceal this his Converſion, deſired the good Biſhop not publickly to anoint him with the Chriſm, (the uſual way then of admitting Hereticks, when converted, into the Boſom of the Church) but that he would privately, and in ſecret, perform this Ceremony for him: He had this Anſwer; *If you do truly believe what our Lord hath taught us, then do accordingly. Now he ſaith thus; If any one Confeſs me before Men, &c. And again, He that denyeth me before Men, &c. In like manner forewarning his holy Apoſtles concerning the tryals of the enſuing Perſecutions, He thus admoniſheth them; Beware of Men, for they ſhall deliver you up to the Councils, and they will ſcourge you in their Synagogues, and ye ſhall be brought before Governours and Kings for my ſake, and for a Teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles. But you (ſaith he) being a King, and ſo in no danger of being brought before any one, do yet refuſe in publick to confeſs the Creator of all things, for fear of the Sedition of your own Subjects. But God cannot be mocked; nor does he love him, who for the ſake of an Earthly Kingdom, refuſeth to confeſs his Name.* But *Gundebald* ſtill continuing in his Refuſal to make a publick Confeſſion of his Faith, and deſiring to be thought to be of another Belief than he really was in his Heart, remained juſtly excluded the Communion of the Orthodox Church, even to his lives end. *Greg. Turon de geſtis Franc. lib. 2. cap. 34.*

And now, if after all this it ſhould be ſtill objected, in manifeſt Contradiction to the known Wiſdom, as well as Moderation of theſe celebrated Guides and Rulers of the Church, that they required of Chriſtians more than was neceſſary, and were too ſevere and rigorous in their Cenſures; I ſhall next appeal and cite them to a much higher Tribunal, and ſuch as they muſt needs acknowledge to be wholly infallible in all it Cenſures. Which brings me to my fourth General conſideration, *viz.*

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The Miraculous Preſervation of ſome, and Supports of others, who were ſincere and conſtant in their Confeſſion, and the no leſs miraculous and extraordinary Puniſhments divinely inflicted upon the contrary Offenders.

AND firſt then, tho' the Scripture had not otherwiſe (as it does) ſo expreſſly commended that of the three Children, who choſe to be caſt into a fiery Furnace, rather than, by bowing down their Bodies before it, ſeem to Worſhip the Golden Image which *Nebuchadnezar* had ſet up; yet what better Argument could we have of Gods immediate Approbation of that Action, than his ſo miraculous Preſervation of them?

The like Miracle we alſo find in the Epiſtle of the Church of *Smyrna*, concerning *Polycarp* the Biſhop of that City, who being upon the like account condemned to be burnt to Death, as ſoon as the Pile of Wood was well kindled, the Flames roſe up round about him at a diſtance, in the manner of a great Arch, or like the Sails of a Ship, when filled with the Wind: Whilſt he remained in the midſt untouched, and without harm. Which being taken notice of with Admiration, and ſeeing that it was impoſſible to put an end to his Life by Fire, one of the Executioners was commanded to run him thorow with a Sword.

Pontianus, who, for refuſing to Sacrifice, ſuffered at *Spoleto* under the Emperor *Antoninus*, after he had been almoſt all other ways miſerably Tormented, was then thrown to the Lions in the Theatre, who would not ſo much as once touch him. After that he was thruſt into Priſon, there to be Starv'd to death: But being unexpectedly fed by the miniſtry of an Angel, for ſeveral days, the Judge commanded boyling Lead to be poured all over his naked Body; and ſtill when this alſo could not kill him, they at laſt put an end to his Life, by cutting off his Head.

Euſebius in like manner tells us of a great many Chriſtians ſuffering under *Diocleſian*, in the City *Tyre* of *Phenicia*, who having been expoſed to Lions, Bears, Leopards, and other ravenous Beaſts, never received the leaſt harm from them; tho' when tryed with any other Perſons, the beaſts fell greedily to their Work. Which tho' it juſtly cauſed Amazement in all Beholders, yet their cruel Perſecutors, not ſuffering them to eſcape ſo, put them all to the Sword, and then caſt their Bodies into the Sea.

Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 8. c. 7.

The like to this we alſo read, happening to *Eluthcrius*, *Cecilia*, *Euſtratius*, and many others in the ſeveral Martyrologies. who, tho' they were

were all ſuffered to die, at laſt by one ſort of death or another, that ſo the Rewards of their Conſtancy might no longer be deferred, were yet firſt wonderfully preſerved from ſo many kinds, that it might thereby ſufficiently appear, both how able the ſame Divine Power was to have ſtill preſerved them from any violent death at all; and how miraculouſly Heaven owned their Cauſe, and ſo, how altogether inexcuſable was the Obſtinacy of thoſe, who would not be convinced thereby.

But ſtill moſt Remarkable is that of one *Theodore*, who underwent all ſorts of Torments for half a day together, with ſuch ſtrange Chearfulneſs and Alacrity, that *Salluſt* the *Prefect*, to whom *Julian* the Apoſtate had given that unacceptable Employment, being perfectly amazed thereat, and utterly deſpairing of Succeſs, remanded the Man to Priſon; and, going to the Emperour, honeſtly adviſed him to leave off ſuch Cruelties; ſince otherwiſe he would only procure ſtill greater Honour to the Chriſtians, and to himſelf nothing at all but Diſgrace and Shame thereby. Afterwards this *Theodore* was ſet free, and went to *Antioch*: When being asked; *If he felt any Pain when in the burning hot Brazen Inſtrument*? He anſwered, That at the firſt he did feel ſome: But ſoon after one in the Form of a young Man ſtanding by him, continually wiped off his Sweat, and bathed him with cold Water; with which he was ſo admirably comforted and delighted, that after he was releaſed and ſet down, he could not chuſe but be troubled thereat. *Ruffin. lib. 1. c. 36.*

We want not alſo very grave Authors, and of unqueſtionable Credit (one of them too, far enough from being any [e] Friend to the Cauſe) who tell us of a great many Perſons under the Arian Perſecution, who had ſtill the Miraculous continuation of the Gift of Speaking, even after they had had their Tongues pluck'd out. [e] *Procop. Hiſt. Vandal.*

Now, tho' thus to be preſerved from ſo many Deaths and Inconveniences, or not to be ſenſible of any Pain at all under the hands of ſuch exquiſite Tormenters, is a Thing aſtoniſhing to conſider of; yet for Men ſo to behave themſelves, as all the reſt of the Martyrs did, even under the greateſt Senſe of Pain, is to be look'd upon as neither much leſs Admirable, nor leſs to our preſent Purpoſe. But yet concerning that ſupernatural Courage, with which they bore their Torments, I ſhall not need to beſtow much time; having already (tho' to a different Purpoſe) produced ſo many Inſtances of Extraordinary Conſtancy, which may equally ſerve alſo, as ſo many Arguments of an Extraordinary Divine Support, and conſequently of God's immediate Approbation too, of the particular Cauſes for which, and manner after which they ſuffered. The Conſequence of both which, was indeed ſo apparent to thoſe who impartially weighed the Matter, that ſeveral of the Judges themſelves, and many of their very Tormenters, were ſo powerfully convinc'd thereby, as to become immediately Confeſſors and Martyrs their own ſelves.

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But waving all these Examples, both as already sufficiently well known to most, and as too numerous to be here particularly related, I shall at present content my self with one Example onely, of a little different kind, which may well serve for all the rest; since it is such as, I think, nothing in all History can go beyond it. It happen'd in the Persecution in *Ægypt*, carried on by the Emperour *Maximinus*, and was there also presented to the World in the Person of a young and tender Virgin, the Beautiful and Virtuous *Potamenia*; who, escaping the double Trap laid for her, by the Complotment of her lustful Master and the wicked Judge, Nobly scorn'd to save her Life, as She was offered, by denying Christ either with her Mouth, or by the future unsuitable ill Life she was tempted to. Whereupon she was presently condemn'd to be put stark naked into a great Brass Vessel full of boiling hot Pitch, there ready prepared for that purpose. But the heavenly Creature, hearing this Sentence, Thus apply'd herself to the Judge; *Since you are resolved* (said she) *That I shall die this sort of Death, Let me entreat, nay, let me Conjure you by the very Head of your Emperour, which to you* (*I perceive*) *is of all Things most dear and sacred, That you would not make an End of me presently, nor all at once, but let me in leisurely and by degrees, one Part after another; That so you may plainly perceive and know, what Torments, and how patiently too, that God whom I worship, and you know not, both can, and will enable me to undergo for His sake.* Which Request of hers, being both easily granted, and punctually performed, she bare that unspeakable Torture for a whole Hour together, with unparallell'd Courage, till at length the Pitch bubling up to her very Neck, she expir'd.

Pallad. in Lausiac. c. 1.

Now I make no question, but that she first felt what she said, otherwise it had been impossible, that ever she could have said so under those Circumstances; and much more, that she could ever have so made good her Challenge. The bare Consideration, methinks, of such a Confession, and such a Martyrdom, should be enough to convert, even the greatest Atheist, and to extort from him also a Confession, That herein must needs be the Finger, or rather indeed the Arm of God.

But I proceed to the miraculous Punishments divinely inflicted upon several of the contrary behaviour: Where, passing by such of them, as sometimes immediately followed upon those other just Censures of the Church in General, I shall, still more closely, confining my self to the Subject in hand, take notice only what followed of this kind upon this particular Sin of Dissimulation or Denial. Now, if the first remarkable Judgment inflicted in the very Infancy of the Gospel, was that upon *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, so wonderfully spoken to Death by St. *Peter*, for their Dissimulation, in endeavouring to be thought to have done, what really they had not, and that in a Matter of good too; where *to seem to be*, is no fault at all, provided we really be so also; What shall we then think of those, how faulty and obnoxious must we needs suppose them, who endeavour the same in

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an evil Matter, where to desire *to seem*, as well as *to be*, has in it self also a distinct Faultiness? For tho' Piety may, yet Wickedness cannot be wholly counterfeited. Here, only to *desire to seem*, is also *to be* in some proportion. Whosoever can once find in his heart to court it, must also at the same time, well deserve the Reputation of it: For to endeavour to be thought bad, is actually to become so in a great measure; since 'tis always evil, not to avoid (as much as possible) the very Appearance of Evil.

But we want not Variety of more direct Examples in the Writings of the Primitive Fathers. *Tertullian* acquaints us with a Woman, who, so far only complying with the Pagan Idolatries, as to go to their publick Theatre, returned thence possess'd with an unclean Spirit; who being in Exorcism, expostulated with, how he durst set upon one of the Faithful? Boldly reply'd, that he did no more therein, than what of Right belong'd to him; since he found her within his own Territories. *Tertul. lib. de spect.*

St. *Cyprian* likewise, speaking of the Wonderful Prodigies happning to those, who in the time of Persecution, had prevaricated from their Profession, relates several very memorable Stories, which I shall give you (as near as I can) in his own Words. *If* (saith he) *some unbelieving People give less Credit to what is still to come, let them be terrified, at least, with what has actually for the present happened. Behold, how many remarkable Punishments of those who have deny'd, have we our selves seen with our eyes? How many of their unhappy Ends do we still lament? Even here they cannot go wholly without Punishment, tho' the Day of Punishment be not yet come. But in the mean time some are chastised, that others may be thereby amended; For the Examples belong to all, whilst the Torments to a few only. One of those, who of their own accord went up to the Capitol to deny the Faith, after he had done so, was presently struck dumb. The Punishment began from that part, from whence the Crime began; so that he was wholly unable to ask Pardon, who now wanted the use of Speech, whereby to sue for Mercy. Another of the Female Sex, being then in the Bath (for this was still wanting to her former Crimes, that she should presently betake her self to the Bath, who had so lately forfeited the Grace of that Vital Laver of Baptism) There the unclean Creature, forthwith possess'd with an unclean Spirit, fell down to the ground; with her Teeth tore her own Tongue, with which she had so wickedly either fed, or spoken; After the Idolatrous Food had once been taken in, the Fury of her Mouth was armed to its own Destruction: She became her own Executioner; nor could she survive long afterwards; but, grievously tormented with intolerable Pains in her Bowels, breath'd out her last.* Cyprian *lib. de Lapsis.*

After these, the holy Man immediately adds hereto three or four other Prodigies of the like Nature: some of his own Knowledge, and such of which he affirms himself to have been an eye-witness; and then concludes after this manner: *Quam multi quotidie*, &c. *How ma-*

Confession necessary

ny daily, neglecting to do Penance for their Denial, or to confess the Guilt of their Crime, are fill'd with such unclean Spirits? How many disturbed in Mind, even to downright Distraction, are perfectly overwhelm'd with the Rage of their own Madness? Nor need we descend to the several Catastrophes of every one in particular; since by the manifold Ruines of the World, the Punishments of the several Offences are no less various, than the Multitude of the Offenders themselves is numerous.

To this of St. *Cyprian*, we may also add, that of *Theodoret*, who informs us, That *Julian*, the Uncle of *Julian* the Emperour, having, (to gain favour with that Apostate) deny'd the Christian Faith, soon after fell into a strange Disease, which so eat up his very Bowels with putrefaction, that he could no more void his Excrements, according to the usual course of Nature, but only through that polluted Mouth, with which he had deny'd his Saviour: Even himself being sufficiently convinced before he died, that this was the immediate Hand of God upon him, for his Apostacy and Persecutions.

Theod. l. 2. cap. 11, 12.

Nicephorus likewise tells us of one *Heron* a Bishop, who, having been guilty of the same Crime, suffer'd the same divine Punishment, which made him so odious and intolerable a Spectacle, that he was cast out of doors into the High-way, where he ended his Days, of all Men unpitied.

Niceph. l. 10. c. 29.

The same Author also speaks of one *Theotecnus*, who, after his Apostacy, had all his Flesh turn'd into Corruption and Worms, by the continual Bitings of which, he first lost his Eyes, and then through Extremity of Pain and Anguish, growing perfectly distracted, bit off and devour'd his own Tongue, and so ended his present, to go still to far greater Torments.

In short; How extreamly shameful is the Sin, and how Infinitly great the danger of such Denials or even Dissimulations in the Case of our Religion, may no less sufficiently appear from those miraculous means which God sometimes makes use of, in order to recall and reestablish such Offenders. [g] One very remarkable Instance of which kind we have in *Apollonius*, a certain Reader in the Church at *Thebais*; who, terrify'd by the prospect of ensuing Torments, and yet desiring to avoid a formal down-right Denial contrived to bribe one *Philemon* a *Pagan* friend, by the gift of four Pieces of Gold, that, changing his Habit, he might counterfeit the Person of *Apollonius*, and so, among others, Offer Sacrifice before the Magistrate. But this Heathen, being of a sudden divinely enlightened in his Mind, and warmed by the Example of the Martyrs, instead of acting the Person of another Man, represented his own in good Earnest; and having openly professed his belief in Christ, and being exquisitly Tormented for so doing, still again and again constantly persisted in affirming the same thing, till he was at last honoured with the Glorious Crown of Martyrdom. By whose

[g] *Ex Metaph. 14. Decemb. St. Sur. To. 6. post Acta Thyrsi & sociorum citante Baron. vol. 3. p. 54.*

whoſe unexpected Example alſo *Apollonius*, being much Encouraged and even aſhamed out of his former Cowardice, afterwards with a Conſtant Mind underwent the ſame Combate.

Nay, Providence has been ſometimes pleaſed to declare the future Rewards of Martyrs, and the Puniſhment of Deſertors even by a Viſion from Heaven ſo manifeſt to their very Tormentors, that they have become Confeſſors thereupon, to which purpoſe in one of [f] St. *Baſils* Orations, we have this following Relation. In the leſſer *Armenia*, under the Perſecution of *Licinius*, forty Chriſtian Soldiers were condemned to die, for their reſolute Confeſſion of Chriſt, by being expoſed quite Naked to the Extremities of rigid Cold and Froſt; yet ſo as that any of them might, upon their Denial of their Faith, retire into a Warm convenient Place, near hand prepared to receive them, upon that Condition only. After they had for ſome time bravely undergone the extreme Severity, one of the *Pagan* Officers, who was conveniently placed hard by, to ſee this Sentence duely Executed upon them, obſerved a Company of Angels deſcending, and placing ſeveral Crowns upon the Head of each of the whole Number, one of them onely accepted; who, preſently afterwards being weary of the Tryal and denying Chriſt, was ſuffered to Retreat into the Warm Receptacle, but preſently dyed thereupon. The Officer himſelf Powerfully convinced by this Miraculous Viſion, openly confeſſed himſelf a Chriſtian, and boldly ſtepping into the Place of the Apoſtate, ſupply'd the deficiency of the firſt Number, and with the reſt received his Crown of Martyrdom.

[f] *Baſil. Orat. in 40. Martyres.*

Now, tho' all theſe Prodigies and many more, which might be ſtill produced of the like Nature, have been, and are ſtill ſufficient, when well conſidered, to convince even a heathen Obſervator; yet we, who believe already and have received the Holy Scripture for our Rule of Faith, need not wholly depend upon ſuch Arguments, as having this other ſtill more ſure Word of Propheſy for our Confirmation in this Point. Which ſhall be my Fifth Conſideration, *viz.*

CHAP. XI.

How Expreſs and Poſitive the Scripture is for the abſolute Neceſſity of ſuch a Conſtant Confeſſion upon all Occaſions, and how directly it Forbids and Condemns the contrary Denials and Diſſimulations.

WHAT can be more plain in this Caſe, than the Words of our Great Lord and Maſter to his Diſciples after His Reſurrection? Act. 1. 8. *Ye ſhall be Witneſſes unto me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth.*

But had his Diſciples, whilſt under their Tryals and manifold Perſecutions, deny'd Chriſt with their Mouths, tho' they had ſecretly acknowledged him in their Hearts, they would have been found therein no better than falſe and lying Witneſſes, and indeed none of Chriſt's, but the Devil's Martyrs or Witneſſes, who is a Lyar from the Beginning. And however peculiar this Command might be to the Apoſtles and firſt Diſciples of our Saviour, who alone had the Opportunity of being immediate Eye-Witneſſes of His Reſurrection; yet elſewhere the Injunction is General and without Exception indiſpenſably obliging all Chriſtians in all Ages, as a Duty ſo abſolutely neceſſary, that upon the performance or neglect thereof, will depend our Eternal Happineſs or Miſery, our being owned as his Genuine Diſciples, or our being finally rejected as Caſt-awaies at the laſt Great day.

For thoſe are the Expreſs Words which flowed alſo from the ſame Bleſſed Lips of Truth. *Matth.* 18. 32. Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before Men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father which is in Heaven; But whoſoever ſhall deny me before Men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in Heaven.

Upon which place, thus ſaith the Comment of that Antient and Learned Author, commonly going under the Name of St. *Chryſoſtom*, *The Faith of the Heart will no more avail, without the Confeſſion of the Mouth, than the Confeſſion of the Mouth will, without the Faith of the Heart. And if it muſt be enough for Chriſt that we know him, tho' we Confeſs him not before Men; therefore, it muſt be enough for us alſo, that he knows us, tho' at the laſt he Confeſs us not before Men. 'Tis not ſufficient for any, to ſay, I retain the Truth in my Heart, and in the mean time diſown it before the World. And therefore he does not ſay; He that confeſſeth me in his heart*, but, *He that confeſſeth me before Men.* And again, Mark 8. 38. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my Words, in this Adulterous and Sinful Generation, of him alſo*

alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the Holy Angels. Conſonant to this alſo is what St. *Paul* aſſures us, Rom. 10. 10. *With the Heart Man believeth unto Righteouſneſs, and with the Mouth Confeſſion is made unto Salvation.* And 2 Tim. 2. 12. *If we deny him, he will deny us.* The ſame Apoſtle likewiſe earneſtly Exhorts Timothy, *Not to be aſhamed of the Teſtimony of our Lord, but to be partaker of the Afflictions of the Goſpel.* 2 Tim. 1. 8. In like manner he plainly intimates and neceſſarily ſuppoſeth, *That he that denyeth the Faith is much worſe than an Infidel.* 1 Tim. 5. 8. So we are aſſured that it is the Expreſs will of God, *That every Tongue ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Lord, to the Glory of God the Father:* Phil. 2. 11.

That Apoſtle likewiſe, who by ſad Experience was but too well acquainted with the Hainouſneſs of the Crime, and had wept bitterly for his own Denial, does being afterwards converted, (according to his Lords Injunction) effectually endeavour to ſtrengthen his Brethren, whilſt he commands us in the name of God, *To be ready always* (that is, even in the midſt of Terrours, and under the greateſt dangers of Perſecution, as plainly appears by the verſe foregoing) *to give an Anſwer to every Man, that asketh us a reaſon of the Hope that is in us.* 1 Pet. 3. 15. Which place of Scripture can no otherwiſe be underſtood, than as neceſſarily requiring our Readineſs at all times, not to palliate or conceal, but openly to confeſs our Faith: For all our Hope being grounded upon our Faith, it is impoſſible for us to give any Reaſon of the firſt, without giving alſo a reaſon of the Second; And as impoſſible to give any Reaſon or Account at all of either, without making a plain confeſſion and acknowledgment thereof. To Conclude; In the Revelations of St. *John*, amongſt other hainous Criminals, *Idolaters, and all that love or make a lie*, are perfectly excluded the holy City, and have their Portion allotted them *in the lake, which burneth with Fire and Brimſtone; which is the ſecond Death*: Whereas *he that overcometh*, (that is, by a conſtant confeſſion) is there promiſed *the Inheritance of all things.* Rev. 21. 7, 8. and Rev. 22. 15. And in the Epiſtle to the Church of *Pergamos*, our Lord himſelf highly approves of *Antipas* by name, for his dying for the Faith, and commends that Church alſo for her conſtancy therein, in theſe Words; *Thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my Faith, even in thoſe days wherein Antipas was my faithful witneſs, who was ſlain among you, where Satan dwelleth.* Rev. 2. 13.

I have here all along (you ſee) confined my ſelf only to Expreſs commands and prohibitions in the Caſe, together with the Rewards and Penalties, the Divine Approbation or Diſlike, no leſs expreſly ſignify'd and annexed, upon the performance or Neglect of what is ſo required. All which are ſo many direct Proofs of the abſolute Neceſſity of this Duty of confeſſion. But ſhould I alſo undertake particularly

ticularly to insist upon all those other numerous places in holy writ, which either suppose or imply the same obligation, by a most natural and unavoidable Consequence; I should then oblige my self to transcribe (well nigh) the greater part of the whole New Testament. For indeed the very Nature and Genius, the whole Tenour and Current of the Gospel runs this way. All those multiply'd Precepts and Doctrines about Patience and Self-denial, about Suffering and Taking up the Cross, about our Readiness to lay down our Lives, and not to fear those who can kill the Body; about Christian Simplicity and Love without Dissimulation, Giving no Offence, and abstaining from all Appearance of Evil; All these Precepts, Cautions, and Exhortations, and innumerable more of the like kind, are either chiefly for the sake of, or most closely imply the Absolute Necessity of this prime Duty which we are discoursing of; since otherwise they must needs be either wholly in vain, or to very little purpose so much inculcated. So that did it not so apparently gratify the sinful Inclinations of corrupt Flesh and Blood, in delivering Men all at once, from ever tasting the unpleasing Severities of the Cross, one would think it impossible, that it should ever enter into the Heart of any to affirm, That, concealing their Faith within their own Breast, they might innocently deny the same with their Mouth, or any other way dissemble it by their Actions. Since 'tis most evident, there's no other Crime whatsoever, the Lawfulness of which they could contrive to maintain, with greater defyance of the most broad-faced Light of Scripture to the contrary. Wheu in the mean time they have nothing to colour over or disguise the deadly Poyson, but one or two passages only in all the Bible, and those too most miserably wrested and abused by them. Which again carries me onstill to the distinct Task of a sixth Enquiry or Consideration, *viz.*

CHAP. XII.

How false and foolish are the pretended Grounds and Reasons, upon which such Dissemblers endeavour to Justify and establish their contrary Opinion and Practice; together with the many absurd consequences and most monstrous Inconveniences of diverse kinds necessarily following thereupon.

NOW after that of their most beloved *Naa-man*, their only place seems to be that of *Prov.* 23. 26. or some other such like it, wherein we have it signify'd, That God sees, and chiefly regards Men's Hearts. From whence they boldly infer, That if the

they do but take Care to keep their Hearts for God, by ſafely wrapping up a right belief therein, they may then venture with their Mouths, or by any other action of their outward Man, ſecurely to deny the ſame: Or elſe provided they can but ſecretly keep up in their Hearts a rectify'd Intention, they may then very ſafely both be preſent at, and with their lips join, or at leaſt ſeem to join with others, in ſuch Prayers, the matter of which is otherwiſe acknowledged to be directly againſt their Duty, and the Divine command.

Now they who thus teach the Lawfulneſs of Diſſimulation, ſeem even in their very ſo doing, actually to Diſſemble with us, whilſt they teach that, which they themſelves do no way really believe; and yet would be thought to do ſo, merely out of a deſign the better to ſecure their Reputation, to cover the ſhame of their own baſe Actions ſo agreeable thereto, and as the only expedient to excuſe and take off the odium of their foul Hypocriſie among their friends, when they happen to be reproved for it by them. So that we have great reaſon to ſuſpect, that ſuch Men do not ſay as they think, when they ſay, they think it lawful, to deny what they think. However, this Aſſertion ſeems, in the natural conſequence thereof, to contradict, fall foul upon, and even overturn its own ſelf; at leaſt, to take away the very foundation of its finding Credit with any other Perſon, whom they can never reaſonably induce to think; That they ſay true in what they affirm, when they affirm, That they believe it lawful for them ſo to deny their belief. Since how can we ever be ſecure (according to their own Principles) that they may not as well lie, and in this very Caſe, falſely ſay, that they do believe, what they really do not, as in the other Caſe falſely deny their belief of what they really do believe? But paſſing from the Perſons, to the thing it ſelf, and leaving them to believe, or not believe, as they will; the pretended ground and main reaſon for what they ſo maintain, I'm ſure, is altogether falſe and frivolous.

For, in the firſt place, it is by no means true, That God has Men's Hearts in ſuch Caſes, or that they do, or can therewith at the ſame time truly ſerve him. Which I m confident, will very eaſily appear to any one, who (not reſting in the mere empty ſound of Words, without any ſenſe at all) ſhall only well conſider, what that phraſe does truly ſignify and import.

Now God is then (and can only then be) truely ſaid to have our Hearts when he has the Affections thereof, in ſuch a due Fear, Reverence, and Love of him above all things, as may effectually diſpoſe us, to endeavour to pleaſe him in all the ways of his own direction to that purpoſe; that is, in one Word, by keeping of His Commandments, whatſoever preſent loſs or hardſhip it ma, coſt us for ſo doing. So that when we can knowingly venture to diſpleaſe

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him by acting contrary thereto, it muſt be alwaies for the ſake of ſomething elſe, which we at the ſame time really more fear, love, and prefer before our Maker; and which therefore (whatſoever we may pretend to the contrary) has our Hearts in good earneſt, and not the Living Lord who ſearcheth them. Such Hypocrites indeed do allow God (what they cannot help) ſomething of their *Heads*; ſince their Underſtandings ſeem rightly enough informed, concerning what they ought to do: But their *Hearts* he is far enough from having, whilſt they can find in their Hearts, to act ſo quite contrary to that Knowledge. Unleſs we can ſuppoſe, That they who ſin moſt againſt their own Knowledge or Conſcience, may be ſaid therein, the moſt to give God their Heart. Beſides, the very reaſon why God ſo chiefly requires the heart, is, becauſe whenſoever he has that truely, he muſt of neceſſity have therewith alſo the whole Man; whilſt every Thought, Word, and Action is naturally reduced thereby into a ſuitable Obedience. So that 'tis wholly impoſſible to ſeparate or put aſunder, what God and Nature have ſo cloſely conjoined. Whereſoever there is really the *Heart* of a Sincere Diſciple, there will alſo be the *Lips* of a confeſſour, upon occaſion; the Obſervation of our Bleſſed Saviour being no leſs true in the good, than in the bad Senſe, That *out of the Abundance of the Heart, the Mouth ſpeaketh.*

But ſtill in the Second place, were it poſſible in ſuch Caſes, That God could truly have the Heart, yet that alone by no means would be ſufficient: For tho' we may, indeed, find that this (upon the grounds already ſpecify'd) is the main thing regarded by him; yet where do we read, that this is the only thing requiſite? Who is it that hath exempted the outward Man from the Juriſdiction of him who equally Created both Parts for his own Glory? We find, its true, ſome perſons, and what kind of ones withal they were, whom the *Pſalmiſt* brings in paunting it to this purpoſe; yet who can juſtly ſay, or without the higheſt Preſumption, That *his Tongue is his own*, to do with it what he pleaſeth?

Did we indeed conſiſt of nothing elſe but naked Spirit, it might then be perhaps, ſufficient *to ſanctify the Lord God in our hearts* only: But ſince we are cloathed with Fleſh, and *he hath given us a body, as it hath pleaſed him*, he juſtly expects, as well as expreſly requires; *That we ſhould glorify him, in our body*, no leſs than *in our ſpirit, which are* [illegible] 2 Cor. 6. 20.

And ſtill, as this pernicious Hereſie is (you ſee) thus utterly falſe and groundleſs, in what it pretends to for its ſupport; ſo the abſurd conſequences and inconveniences thereof are prodigiouſly both great and numerous.

For firſt, were what is ſo pretended, indeed ſufficient for the purpoſe, as I have already proved it far enough from being ſo; yet where the Love of the Truth is ſo very feeble, and that of the World

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ſo ſtrong, that the Man can prevail with himſelf totally to deny his Faith in his Words and outward Actions, the faint remainders thereof ſtill ſecretly retained in his Heart, or head rather, muſt needs have ſo ſlender a hold in either, that they are very unlikely to be long-lived with him in ſo unſuitable an Habitation.

Nay, they who can afford to make it once their Cuſtom, with the outward Man, to join, or but ſo much as to ſeem to join, with others in publick, in ſuch Service or Prayers, any part whereof they verily believe to be, as to the matter thereof, unlawful, and which in their Hearts they inwardly deteſt, there is very great danger of ſuch perſons coming by degrees, to be alſo inwardly reconciled thereto, and at laſt fully and totally to join with them in good earneſt.

What befell *Geneſius*, who, by order of the Emperour *Dioclefian*, acting on the Theatre the part of a Chriſtian, with an intent to ridicule and expoſe that holy Profeſſion, was ſo ſuddenly changed, that, inſtead of ſo doing, he ſeriouſly profeſſed, and dyed for that Religion; as alſo what happen'd of the ſame nature to one *Porphyry* another famous Actor alike employed by *Julian* to the ſame purpoſe: Theſe indeed are to be look'd upon as Events very extraordinary and miraculous. But that of the Wretch, ſpoken of by *Lucian*, who acting the part of mad *Ajax*, was ſo forcibly carry'd away with the Affection, that himſelf became ever afterwards really diſtracted; is a thing far leſs ſtrange, and perhaps even in a natural way, fairly enough accountable. And however in a Moral ſenſe, there is no mere counterfeiting of an ill Man, without being ſo alſo in down-right earneſt. He that can once take upon him, or make it his buſineſs only to act the part of an Infidel, will eaſily learn to be an Original, and, acting the part to the very Life, will at laſt naturally become ſuch in reality, to all intents and purpoſes. 'Tis poſſible for a man to tell a lie ſo often, till at length, forgetting it to be ſo, he comes, no leſs than others, to give a real Credit thereto; beſides they are eaſily perſwaded to a total deſertion thereof, who never yet taſted any thing of the pleaſures of Religion; which yet can never be truly reliſhed without Sincerity. So that what wonder is it, that they ſhould in the concluſion *be given over to believe a lie, who at firſt received not the Truth in the love thereof?* For 'tis difficult long to hold the *Truth in Unrighteouſneſs:* But having once *put away a good Conſcience*, by ſuch ſhameful Tricks and Artifices, Men come naturally at length to make Shipwrack of their right Faith; which, whilſt indeed they had it, could ſerve for no other purpoſe, but only to make them extremely reſtleſs and uneaſy, by continually upbraiding them with their quite contrary Hypocritical Practices.

But ſtill, in the ſecond place, could ſuch Men be ſure, that they ſhould never proceed any farther, yet to endeavour to ſeem what they are not, and not to ſeem, what they are, being no other in it ſelf than formal down-right Hypocriſie; To conclude therefore, that they may go thus far ſafely, muſt neceſſarily imply their Belief of the no Neceſſity of that Sincerity, which the Goſpel every where ſo ſtrictly urges and re-

quires above all things; and that Hypocriſie it ſelf is far from being really a thing ſo diſpleaſing to God, as 'tis there pretended, and repreſented. Nay, whereas God has ſo expreſly declar'd, That our very beſt Performances are with him nothing at all worth, unleſs they proceed from and be accompanied with Sincerity; What height then of Preſumption and Blaſphemy muſt it needs be, to expect, That the groſſeſt Diſſimulation alone ſhould ſo effectually recommend Men to the Favour of the God of Truth, as that he ſhould pardon and excuſe them, for the very worſt Crime they could poſſibly contrive to commit, merely for the ſake of, and becauſe it is Accompanied with, the moſt ſhameful Lying and Hypocriſie?

Beſides; This curſed Practice and Opinion ſeems to be founded in ſecret Atheiſm, and tacitly implies this other diſtinct Blaſphemy; That God is either not endued with ſufficient Power, or elſe not Good or Wiſe enough, to defend and ſupport Men in the due Obſervation of His own Laws, unleſs they ſometimes help him out, by their vile Lyes and Hypocriſie, and having a Recourſe to the ſhelter of Diſſimulation.

Again; Whereas the Profeſſion of the true Religion is that, which, of all other things, we ought the moſt to Glory in and openly Triumph; ſince thereby we become truly Honourable our ſelves, in ſo glorifying our Creatour: We cannot therefore contrive more effectually to diſhonour both our ſelves and Him, nor caſt a worſe Reflection upon all His Attributes, than in baſely diſowning of our Faith; whilſt in ſo doing we neceſſarily affix this moſt diſgraceful Imputation upon the holy Author thereof, as if he had revealed that to us, which we have good Reaſon, to conceal and be aſhamed of. And accordingly, ſuch Denials are by Chriſt Himſelf expreſly call'd and accounted no better, than *a being aſhamed of Him, and of His words.* And what Thanks, think you, can be due to thoſe Men, who have Thus parted with the Total of their Religion, but only what they cannot yet help the keeping of? What they are aſhamed to own, and fain would, but cannot for the preſent yet get rid of? To proceed; it infers (quite contrary to our Saviour's Caution) great Boldneſs and Preſumption towards Heaven, and Hearts quite evoid of all due Fear of Him, who has declared Himſelf a Conſuming Fire to all ſuch Offenders, and Able to caſt both their Souls and Bodies into Hell; and yet at the ſame time a moſt cowardly and ſlaviſh Fear towards their Fellow-Mortals, whoſe Breath is in their Noſtrils, and whoſe Power at moſt, reacheth no farther than over the Carkaſs, and what belongs thereto; and even that too perfectly limited and reſtrained, according to the Wiſdom and good Pleaſure of Him, whom they ſo fondly deſpiſe in the Compariſon.

And conſequently, in the next place, It argues them alſo no leſs void both of all true Love towards God, and Charity towards their Neighbour; Since, in both reſpects, what St. *John* has aſſur'd us, is moſt certain, That *perfect love caſteth out all ſuch fear; whilſt he that ſo feareth, is far from being yet made perfect in love.* For as our Fear is, ſo is alſo our Love. And whoever yet prevail'd with himſelf to deny his Faith, unleſs tempted thereto by ſomething of the World, the Loſs of

of which he first more fear'd, than the Loss of God's Favour; and which therefore he more lov'd, than God Himself, and sacrilegiously preferr'd before Him? But he who so loves the World or any thing therein, The Love of the Father is not truly in him. And then how can they love their Neighbours, who love not God, for whose sake alone it is they do so, whosoever truly love them? Or what Charity can there be in those, who, instead of being ready (as they are requir'd) to lay down their very Lives for the Spiritual Welfare of their Brethren, can be contented in so high a manner, to grieve and offend, and (as much as in them lies) by their Scandalous Examples of Denial, even to destroy those for whom Christ died?

Farthermore; This monstrous Tenet is directly contrary to the very Nature, and dissolves at once the whole Frame of Christianity, by utterly making void the Doctrine of the Cross, and all necessity of our ever suffering as Christians; and consequently takes away in a great measure, all occasion, and supersedes the use and exercise of all those highly commendable Vertues, of Zeal and Christian Courage, of Faith and Patience, of Meekness and Forgiving Enemies, together with many other Precepts and Injunctions of the like nature, which now make up so very considerable a part of the Gospel. For what Occasion or Opportunity can there be, in this respect, for the Exercise of any of those Graces, when there is not the least Danger or Necessity of suffering? And how can there be any Necessity of this, if we may lawfully say or do any thing, in order to prevent it? For no Man being endued with the Ability of looking into another mans heart, if we may therefore secretly retain our Faith there only, and yet deny the same with our Mouths, and Actions, and can constantly continue to do so, we must needs be perfectly safe from all Danger of Persecution upon that Account: Since the greatest Tyrant in the World, can possibly require no more of us, but must and will rest satisfy'd hereupon.

Again therefore; It necessarily condemns the Practice, and shamefully reviles the precious Memory of all the Glorious Confessors and Holy Martyrs; who, might this Doctrine once obtain for truth, must be no longer accounted Martyrs, but even the worst of Murderers, who could afford so rashly to cast away their Lives needlesly and to no purpose, and offer up to God the mere Sacrifice of Fools. Nay, even all those also, who have constantly payed such deserved Respect and Deference to the Memories of these *Heroes*, that is, the whole Church of God in general, must justly be condemned therein, as guilty of Worse than superstitious Vanity, and be thought to have out-done even that ridiculous Folly of the very *Turks*, who are said to believe a sort of Sacredness in, and to shew no small Veneration towards the Persons of Fools and Madmen.

Another monstrous Consequence thereof still is, That it utterly destroys the main use of Language; defeats the very end, for which our Tongues and Lips, and other Organs of Speech were chiefly bestowed upon us. Which was to enable us more certainly to convey the true inward Sentiments of our minds to one another; to discover our several Abilities or defects; how well, or ill we are inwardly stored

and provided with the Treaſures of Belief and Knowledge, and other Graces; and ſo accordingly edifie and ſupply, confirm and ſtrengthen each other, by receiving, or Communicating mutual helps and aſſiſtances. But now, if Men are not obliged to ſpeak truly what they believe and know; but may be permitted the Liberty of doing the quite contrary, then this admirable Priviledge and Prerogative of Speech, with which Man is endued above any of the Inferior Creatures, muſt not any longer be really ſo accounted of, but be looked upon as given men far worſe than in vain, even to their no ſmall Damage and diſadvantage; ſo that they had far better have been without it. Since, when thus perverted, they muſt either not rely upon it at all, and ſo be ſure never to receive any Benefit thereby; or elſe be fatally miſguided, and eternally deceived and abuſed, if they do depend upon it, as we are naturally inclined.

To which Inconveniency I may therefore add in the next place, That this damnable Hereſie (if yet it deſerves not to be called by a worſe and more comprehenſive name) does tend wholly to ſubvert all foundation and Poſſibility of a Church viſible, and conſequently of of our Communion therewith, and the Benefits therefrom. For what manner of poſſibility could there be, of ever diſcovering, either where the Church is, or that there is indeed auy ſuch thing at all as the Church, were all the Members of it not obliged to any particular Mark or Character, whereby to diſtinguiſh them from the reſt of the World: But inſtead of any ſufficient Sign or Indication of their Faith and Profeſſion, ſhould make it their Buſineſs to hide and conceal themſelves, by joining in their Words and external Actions either with *Hereticks* or with *Pagans* and *Infidels?* Among all the ſeveral Religions that are, or ever yet have been in the World, I know not of any one, but what requires its ſeveral Votaries and Proſelytes, not to deny, but plainly to own their general Belief and Practice. And *for all People* openly *to walk* (as the Prophet *Micah* has it) *every one in the Name of their God*, is a thing both uſual and natural. None ever yet aſſerted the contrary Liberty of Denial, but ſome few onely (as I have already ſhewn) of the very worſt of *Hereticks*, or indeed *Atheiſts* rather, who ſeem therein profeſſed Enemies to Piety it ſelf, and to have deſigned thereby, if poſſible, to root up all Religion in general out of the World; to which purpoſe nothing could be more naturally adapted. But the Chriſtian Inſtitution above any other whatſoever, has this peculiar to it ſelf, that it more ſtrictly requires this publick confeſſion of all who embrace it, ſo as to be always in a Readineſs to Die, much rather than deny the Faith. And how many Millions have actually done ſo upon that ſcore? Whoſe *Blood* has conſtantly proved *the ſeed of the Church*, to propagate and preſerve it: Cou'd the *Pagan* Perſecutors but once have perſwaded Chriſtians to have acted otherwiſe in general, they would then have effected their own buſineſs which they aimed at; that is, The Church had been deſtroyed, and Chriſtianity long ſince utterly Extinguiſhed. For if every Man may keep his own Faith ſecretly to himſelf in his own Heart only, without being obliged any way to declare it by Confeſſion; yet no man is Commanded Privately his own opinion but at the peril of his own Diſcretion & it appears in the Kings Counſel thereby

the ſame either by Words or Actions, what poſſibility is there, That either Poſterity or any others who are yet without it, ſhould ever be acquainted with, or come to the Knowledge of the Truth? Any one Age of Perſecution muſt, in this Caſe, neceſſarily put an end to the Faith, and make it be ſure to die and periſh from off the Earth, together with the Race of ſuch ſecret and conceal'd Believers. And however in the mean time, this quite defeats all the ends of Religious Society, and cuts Men off from all the Benefits of Church-Communion. For if the publick Profeſſion of our Faith be not neceſſary, neither is it neceſſary to be in Communion with any Church at all; with which we cannot be in Communion without ſuch Profeſſion; nor conſequently is it neceſſary that we ſhould, as Members thereof partake of the publick Prayers, Holy Word, or Sacraments; ſince all theſe are as ſo many Profeſſions of the Faith; which, according to this impious Doctrine, we may very ſafely be without. Then alſo the Governours of the Church, whom Chriſt has entruſted with the Power of the Keys, have that Truſt given them in vain: Since, according to this, 'tis impoſſible they ſhould rightly uſe them, unleſs they were able certainly to diſcover Mens Hearts; ſince otherwiſe they muſt needs Cenſure unjuſtly in excluding any from the Church even for the Denial of Chriſt, or for Blaſphemy it ſelf, before they were ſure, that the Heart went alſo along with the Mouth.

They who are conſtantly preſent at any publick Worſhip, are juſtly preſumed thereupon, heartily to join therein, and when they really do not, are thought to put a Notorious Mockery upon God and the whole Society: But yet if we may lawfully play the Hypocrites with the outward Man, then Words and Actions muſt paſs for nothing; Nor will it be poſſible ever to ſatisfy others, of what Communion we are, or to be our ſelves ſatisfyed of this concerning others. But whilſt we think, that we are amongſt very Devout Orthodox Profeſſors, and expect to have our Prayers helped on, and rendered more acceptable and effectual by the united Fervour of many Brethren, we may be all the while very widely miſtaken, and moſt of the Congregation may be either *Socinians*, *Turks*, or *Infidels*, who tho' they ſeem to uſe all the ſame Words with us, do yet in their Hearts pray the quite contrary.

Again; if this were indeed allowable, a Man might then indifferently go to all, and yet altogether in vain to any place of publick Devotion; Since by ſo doing he could neither receive, nor Communicate any farther Benefit, than what might equally acrew to him, in the private performances of his Cloſet only. So that this principle utterly confounds and ſubverts all neceſſary Communion, putting every Man into a Condition of abſolute Independency indeed, wholly ſeparate in matters of Religion from the reſt of Mankind; in a Word, into ſuch a State, as a Man would be in, were there no other Perſon in the whole World beſides him. Nor can ſuch Men ever have any motive to behave themſelves otherwiſe, excepting only upon a Politick account; which may perhaps, now and then induce them to make a ſtep to ſome Religious Aſſembly, or a ſmoaking Temple, to avoid ſome Temporal Inconvenience only, or to Complement and gain Favour with ſome haughty

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Potentate. For by the dreadful Liberty of this impious *Dogma*, Men may (according to the common Proverb, and perhaps beyond the deſign of it) not only, when they are at *Rome*, do as they do at *Rome*, but likewiſe upon occaſion, chant it in a *Jewiſh* Synagogue, or Sacrifice in a *Pagan* Temple; nay, proſtrating themſelves, and (according to the uſual manner) zealouſly knocking their Foreheads againſt the Pavements of a *Turkiſh* Moſque, may ſafely ſeem to join with thoſe Miſcreants in the verbal Repetition of their Prayers, wherein ſometimes they Blaſpheme our Saviour; and yet all this while ſuffer no Impairment of their Chriſtianity, provided only they take Care, to keep themſelves all along good thorow-paced Hypocrites, not minding what themſelves ſay, nor letting their Hearts go along therewith. Now tho' this, I confeſs, is ſuch a ſcandalous and aſtoniſting ſort of Liberty, as may well make the Heart of any Sincere Chriſtian tremble at the very thoughts thereof; ſome there are notwithſtanding, who, ſeeming to be affrighted at the bare hearing of it, are yet in a far greater Readineſs and Preparation to make uſe of the ſame upon Occaſion, than themſelves can now be well aware of. For how many are there in the World, who can allow themſelves, not only to be preſent at, but to ſeem and endeavour to be thought, to join alſo in ſuch ſorts of Petitions, as they acknowledge to be directly againſt their Duty, and in which they cannot inwardly and in their Hearts agree? Now as, it may be, there was a time, when ſuch Men were far from believing, that ever they could have prevailed with themſelves to make ſo large a ſtep; ſo, having once advanced ſo far, 'tis not very eaſy for them, to know certainly, where they would ſtop at laſt; or how much farther ſtill they might be carryed on, by the ſame Temporal motives, upon a ſufficient tryal and occaſion. For tho' totally to deny the Faith, and to change ones Religion ſo all at once, may appear at firſt very horrid and abominable, yet they who, againſt their Conſcience, can now afford ſo deliberatly to play the Hypocrites in any one particular, will, by degrees, be at laſt eaſily enough reconciled even to ſuch a general Apoſtaſy. The only ſafe-guard that can rationally ſecure us from any one, will alſo ſecure us from all haînous Tranſgreſſions; and that is the Conſideration of God's having forbid the ſame. This Bulwark once thrown down, as it muſt needs be by thoſe, who knowingly indulge themſelves in the Habit of any one ſin, and much more in the Habit of Hypocriſie, there is an open way made, for any other Wickedneſs to aſſault and take place with us. And they who, notwithſtanding the confeſſed unlawfulneſs thereof, can find in their hearts to join in one forbidden particular, what can hinder but that they ſhould do ſo in another, and ſo on in a hundred, till they come at laſt to the moſt ſcandalous height imaginable? The only reaſon why ſuch Men are ſo apt to think that they ſhould not do ſo, is only becauſe they are now able, to look upon the extreme Horror of the thing without the Abatements and Diſguiſes of prejudice; as being at preſent under no manner of Temptation thereto, from the like powerful motives of Worldly Fear or Intereſt. However, where all Men may ſafely take the Liberty (as all may if any) to communicate any where, or no where, if they pleaſe, this muſt neceſſarily put an end to all Church Diſcipline, and ſo at the ſame time, to all regular Communion.

But ſtill, to all the foregoing ill Conſequences of a more publick Nature, give me leave to add one or two more immediatly relating to the very Perſons of ſuch Offenders. The

The firſt whereof is, That, beſides their hazarding Eternity thereby, they are far from being ſure, that by this means they can long ſecure to themſelves even that Temporal Eaſe and Safety, which is the only thing they aim at: But have on the contrary great reaſon to fear, that ſuch Hypocriſie will at length even in this World betray them to far greater Inconveniences, than what they hoped to avoid thereby. For tho' this courſe may for a while ſecure them from ſuch dangers; yet when once their Hypocriſie comes to be diſcovered (as, firſt or laſt, it generally is) ſuch Perſons are moſt of all expoſed, and abhorred by all Men. Who, whilſt they are apt ſecretly to Venerate thoſe that plainly profeſs their diſſent from them, and are willing to ſuffer for the ſame; yet naturally treat and look upon ſuch vile diſſemblers with the higheſt deteſtation. And however in the maen time, for them to be obliged to act continually a moſt unnatural part; to have a conſtant Guard upon themſelves, leſt any unwary Word or Action ſhould betray them; to force their Bodies (as Hypocrites muſt do) to be always drudging of it, without, and againſt their Souls; To lie under conſtant Fears and Apprehenſions of a diſcovery, like a day of Judgment; all this muſt needs create a life ſufficiently unpleaſant, ſcarce worth the living, and cannot but be eſteemed even in it ſelf ſo Severe a Puniſhment, that whatſoever elſe can be got thereby, is a dear purchace. And yet after all, if ever they do chance to have their Hypocriſie detected, they can look for no other, than to be treated with the moſt extraordinary ſeverities. For tho' (as I formerly obſerved) the greateſt Tyrant muſt be for the preſent ſatisfy'd with a man's plain Denial of his Faith; yet, if afterwards by any chance trip, ſuch a one can clearly diſcover, that he has been only mocked therein, what ſuitable Effects muſt then be expected to follow from the redoubled Rage and Fury of him, who finds, that, inſtead of a ſubſtantial Convert to his own Religion, he has been only Cheated and affronted with the mere out-ſide and Apparition of a Man, or rather a Snake in his Boſom, a moſt loathſome dangerous diſſembler? Upon this account, as almoſt all Ages of the World ever did, ſo this alſo in which we live, does at preſent afford us, not far from home, a very pregnant Inſtance, with what a zealous and ſuſpicious Eye Politicians juſtly think they have reaſon, to look upon ſuch new pretended Converts, whoſe outward Compliances with them in matters of Religion ſeem wholly owing to ſuch external force and fear. From whence alſo, by the way, may plainly appear the great Folly and Madneſs, of perſecuting Men merely upon the account of Religion. Which is in effect no better, than to incur a great deal of guilt and Odium, and to be at a great deal of invidious Pains, to make a ſort of People, whom themſelves can never think fit, when all is done, to rely upon; nay, the moſt dangerous ſort of Men, the leaſt to be truſted, and the fitteſt to be rooted out of the World of any living therein; as being indeed the common Enemies to Mankind and Human Society in general. So that indeed ſuch Proceeding is no other than firſt to Perſecute without, and againſt all reaſon, that ſo they may have a juſt reaſon to perſecute,

Hypocriſy

Again, in the ſecond Place, another very great but moſt deſerved Inconvenience more peculiarly attending the Perſons of ſuch Offenders, is, That they who have once imbibed and profeſſed this moſt execrable Hereſie, let them pretend to retract, nay, let them really repent and recant the ſame with never ſo much Earneſtneſs and Sincerity; yet 'tis ſcarce poſſible, by all the means they can uſe to that purpoſe, either ſufficiently to ſatisfy the Church, or to gain Credit with any other conſidering Perſon, that they are at length in good earneſt. For they who have once publickly taught this Doctrine, or openly owned it as their avowed Judgment, that it is lawful, in any part, or in whole, to diſſemble their Religion or Belief, and have already practiſed accordingly, may ever afterwards very juſtly be ſuſpected, to be only repeating of the ſame Crime, actually making uſe of the ſame curſed ſort of *Libertiniſm*, even in their very Retractation of it, and at the very time when they pretend to repent thereof. So that they who before rendered Words and Acti-

ons,

ons so wholly insignificant unto others, must now in this Case have made them no less unprofitable to themselves: Since unless they could give Men an immediate prospect of their Hearts, they can never be believed in any thing they may affirm concerning it; nor indeed in any thing else whatsoever upon their own Denial or Affirmation.

To conclude; Let but the same Liberty prevail also in Civil Affairs, (as it equally may and will; for Religion certainly is not the only thing in the World, with which we may thus make bold; but if we may Counterfeit that it self, there can then be nothing else in the World, which we may not also as lawfully dissemble) I say, of this libertine Principle should once generally take place in Civil Affairs and matters of ordinary Conversation, 'twould presently make as sad work in the Commonwealth as in the Church; that is, indeed, utterly confound the same, and destroy the very being of it. For tho' the World be bad enough as it is; yet such would be hereupon the Miserable Alteration of it, that every Man would feel the fatal Effects thereof, and be ready to desire, that the World it self might have a speedy Conclusion. And in the mean time, we should have reason to wish for it, as the far greater Priviledge, that all Men had been made perfectly both deaf and dumb, since the contrary, faculties so strangely perverted, would serve us only to do, and to receive Mischief by. What a sad state of Affairs must that be, wherein there could be no believing, or being believed, and consequently no free Intercourses, no Trading or Commerce with each other? no Government or Subjection? How wretched and deplorable would be our Case, if neither Promises nor Vows, nor the most solemn Oaths themselves could afford us any thing of the least security to be depended on? The whole World would thus become one continued Cheat, nothing but Deceiving, and being Deceiv'd. So that there could be no longer any living together, as now, in Cities or Towns, no, not so much as in private Families: but every Man would be forced, as much as he could, to withdraw himself from others, and each betaking himself to the Wilderness, endeavour to live separate and alone by himself in some Den or Cave of the Earth. And so farewel Civility it self, together with all the Benefits and very being of Humane Society. So that indeed, above all other Criminals or Traitours whatsoever, Governours, as they tender the publick Welfare, are obliged most vigorously to endeavour, to Suppress and Punish this sort of Offenders, as Persons guilty at once of Universal High-Treason against all Government it self; especially, when they find them not only practising but publickly teaching and maintaining the Lawfulness of such Dissimulation. And accordingly, all Wise Magistrates of what Age or sort soever, when ever they could sufficiently discover any Persons guilty of this dangerous Crime, have thought fit to censure them with the utmost Severity; not only as Enemies to Religion it self, without which no Government can be maintain'd, but as immediate and direct Enemies also to the Commom Welfare of mankind and the very being of Human Society. Which shall be my Seventh Consideration.

Note 44 there is more need of Care in Governors not to make them by Imposing what is not safe for any man to practise

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CHAP. XIII.

The common Sense and Judgment of all unprejudiced Mankind of what sort soever constantly agreeing in the Condemnation of such Offenders and Practice, as a thing most Dangerous, Base, Unnatural, and Abominable.

WHen *Isdegerdes* King of *Persia* commanded *Benjamin* a Christian Deacon, to deny the God he Worshipped, strong and unanswerable was the reasoning, by which he refused, saying; *They that desert you, O King, you deservedly put to death: what punishment then, think you, is he worthy of, who basely deserts his Creator?*

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Among the Ancient *Jews*, (not without the command of God himſelf for it) they who were found guilty of Idolatry, or any ſtrange Worſhip, or had done any thing in appearance like it, which might juſtly be ſo Interpretated, were preſently Stoned to Death by the Witneſſes and all the People. And we find that when the Pagans had forced Swines Fleſh into the Mouth of old *Eleazer* the Scribe, he preſently Spat it out again. *And when they who had the charge of that wicked Feaſt, for the old acquaintance they had with the Man, taking him aſide, beſought him to bring Fleſh of his own Proviſion, and ſuch as was lawful for him to uſe, and make as if he did eat of the Fleſh, taken from the Sacrifice, commanded by the King, that ſo he might eſcape Death*; He refuſed the ſame, thus anſwering, like himſelf; *It becometh not our Age in any ways to Diſſemble., whereby many young Perſons might think, that* Eleazer *being Fourſcore Years old and Ten, were now gone to another Religion.* 3. Mac. 6. 18.

In like manner, though it may be obſerved, that the *Jewiſh* People all along before, had but very little kindneſs for the *Samaritans*, upon the account of their Worſhiping the Idols of their own Country, together with the God of *Iſrael*; yet this ſtrangeneſs and hatred of theirs, ſeems to have been much emproved, and grown to the greateſt height imaginable, ſome time before and at our Saviours comming. The Reaſon of which is plain enough, if we do but a little conſult Hiſtory: For after the *Samaritans*, by the leave of *Alexander* the Great, had built for themſelves a Temple on Mount *Gerizim*, like to that of *Jeruſalem*; they preſently began thereupon to magnifie themſelves as now equal to the *Jews* in every thing; vaunting themſelves for the Off-ſpring of *Joſeph* the Father of *Ephraim*, and alike Worſhipers of the true God. But ſoon afterwards, when *Antiochus* began to Perſecute the *Jews* for their Religion, theſe *Samaritans* terrified thereat, preſently changed their Note, plainly denying that they Worſhiped God, but like other People, the Gods of the Heathen only; giving out likewiſe, that they were not *Iſraelites*, but *Sidonians*, and promiſing to dedicate their Temple it ſelf to *Jupiter* of *Crete*. By which means they clearly eſcaped all the effects of that Tyrants Fury. Now this horrid Diſſimulation of theirs, and ſo ſhameful denial of their Religion, ſeems to have been the true chief Reaſon, why the *Jews* ſo deſervedly hated the *Samaritans*, that they willingly neither talked to, nor converſed with them; but ſhunned them upon all occaſions, as a perfect abomination to them.

Now, though it be very true, That Chriſtians have no expreſs Command as the *Jews* had, to put to Death ſuch Idolaters and Diſſemblers; yet the wiſer ſort of Chriſtian Princes alſo, ſenſible of the infinite danger to them of ſuch Practiſes, have thought fit

ſufficiently to ſhew both their Zeal and Severity in the like Caſes.

That good and mild Emperour *Theodoſius* made ſuch ſevere Laws againſt the *Manichees* of his time, as may ſeem very ſtrange to any one not well acquainted what kind of Perſons they were, for their particular Behaviour.

We are to know therefore, that the *Manichees* were wont ſo to inſinuate and intermix themſelves with the Orthodox Chriſtians, that 'twas extremely difficult to diſtinguiſh them; whilſt having no regard at all of Perjury it ſelf, they ſcrupled not falſely to affirm and Swear themſelves Catholicks; and if at any time they happened to be diſcovered and convicted for *Manichees*, then preſently counterfeiting Repentance, and outwardly feigning themſelves to abhor that Hereſy, they ſtill continued inwardly what they were before. And that they might be no more found out, would aſſemble together with the Orthodox in their Churches, and preſume alſo to partake with them even of the Holy Sacrament. So that *Theodoſius* had a great deal of Reaſon to deal ſo ſeverely as he did with this moſt dangerous lurking Sect of Miſcreants, by taking care to ſend them all into perpetual Baniſhment, and ordaining withall, let them pretend themſelves Penitents as much as they would, that they ſhould never any more be admitted to the Communion of the Church, unleſs when they apparently lay a dying.

Baron. Annal v. 4. 613 614.

After the ſame manner a great many of the *Jewiſh* Race, very conſiderable for Wealth and Power, and diſperſed all over the Dominians of *Ferdinand* King of *Caſtile*, having been plainly diſcovered to have play'd the Hypocrites, in that, though they openly profeſſed the Chriſtian Faith, they did yet ſecretly retain and obſerve the *Jewiſh* Law and Ceremonies; That King did not only cauſe many of them, who ſtill continued obſtinate in the Crime to be burnt alive, but commanded the dead Bodies alſo to be taken out of the Graves, of ſuch others of them, who died guilty of the ſame Wickedneſs. Tho' at the ſame time he ſuffered a very great Multitude of other *Jews*, to continue ſafe and undiſturbed in *Spain*; becauſe they fairly and openly obſerved the *Jewiſh* Inſtitution, without any ſuch Hypocriſy or Violation of the Chriſtin Religion.

Camp. Fulgoſ. rerum memorabilium. *lib.* 1. *p.* 33.

Nor is it at all ſtrange, to find Chriſtian Magiſtrates thus affected, when even ſome Hereticks themſelves have ſhewn a like juſt Indignation againſt ſuch flattering Time-ſervers, and dangerous Diſſemblers. To which purpoſe we have a very memorable Example in *Theuderichus*, or *Theodoric* King of the *Goths*, one of whoſe Servants, before greatly beloved and reſpected by him, ſuppoſing by this means, that he ſhould ſtill purchaſe more Favour with that Prince deſerted the Orthodox Faith, and turned of the *Arian* Profeſſion.

But

But *Theuderic* inſtead of being better pleaſed with him, preſently commanded his Head to be cut off, ſaying, *Thou that haſt not kept thy Faith towards God, how wilt thou ever behave thy ſelf Conſcienciouſly towards a Man?*

To proceed, the very *Turks* themſelves, in this reſpect, are very Wiſe and Politick, who, though they grant a general ſort of Indulgence and Toleration, to the Exerciſe of all Religions; yet, as with them Atheiſts are put to Death, ſo they are no leſs ſevere alſo againſt this ſort of Hypocrites: For whoſoever is known by them to be barely preſent with them at their Devotions in one of their *Moſques*, (let the motive be what it will that carried him thither) muſt become a *Moſſelman* immediately, and be Circumciſed forthwith in order to it, or elſe be ſure to die for his prophane Hypocriſy and Affront.

But why ſhould I alledge any of theſe Teſtimonies or Examples? When ſeveral of the wiſer and more conſidering ſort even of Heathens themſelves, have ſufficiently given us to underſtand, what kind of Apprehenſions they had concerning thoſe Perſons, who either for meer fear or Favour, could be induced to change their Religion, or aſhamed to own it. For though it cannot be expected that thoſe very Perſons, who could think fit to Perſecute Chriſtians, (as moſt of the *Roman* Emperours did) on purpoſe to make them ſo play the Hypocrites, ſhould afterwards expreſly reproach or condemn them for having done ſo; (ſince this would be no other than to reflect upon themſelves, and to caſt dirt in their own Faces) yet ſome few others of the Pagan Emperours, (as I ſhall anon ſhew) who happened to be more mild, and leſs of the Spirit of Perſecution, have plainly enough declared, both how meanly they thought of ſuch Diſſemblers, and how honourably of thoſe who remained conſtant in their Profeſſion. And in the mean time, that the moſt eager Perſecutors themſelves had alſo the ſame thoughts of them, will, I think, be undeniable, if we do but well conſider what muſt be their very chief deſign in Perſecuting. Now, to be ſure, they could not be ſo Fooliſh, as once to hope by knocking out their Brains, to enlighten their Underſtandings, and that all the fears and torments in the World ſhould really produce a different Perſwaſion of Mind, or make them in their Hearts believe any otherwiſe than they did before. And indeed, as theſe cruel Wretches could not ſee, ſo neither did they at all regard what Faith it was that Chriſtians carried in their Hearts, ſo they did but keep it there ſecretly to themſelves, (as ſome of them, you have heard, expreſly ſo adviſed) and in the mean time deny the ſame with their Lips, or be ſure never to declare it either by Words or Actions. This once effected, the moſt raging *Diocleſian* would deſiſt, and require nothing farther. Accordingly, when *Pliny* Junior had conſulted *Trajan*, what he ſhould do with the Chriſtians,

the Emperour thus anſwers; *He that denies himſelf to be a Chriſtian, and makes this manifeſt indeed, that is, by Worſhiping our Gods, though he has been formerly ſuſpected, let him yet obtain Pardon upon Repentance.* Upon which account, *Tertullian* in his Apology againſt the *Gentiles*, thus ſmartly Expoſtulates with them; *You do not proceed with us according to the uſual Form of Judging Criminals; but whilſt you apply Tortures to others, who deny the Fact they are accuſed of, to extort a Confeſſion from them, Chriſtians alone you Torment, to make them deny the ſame.* And again a little after, *The Man cries out,* (ſaith he) *I am a Chriſtian, and he ſpeaks therein truly what he is; But ſtill you deſire to hear what he is not: They whoſe Buſineſs it is to force out the Truth, from us alone endeavour to extort a Lye. The Man ſaith, I am that, which whether or no he is, you ask of him; Why do you ſtill Rack him, to make him ſay the contrary? I confeſs, and you ſtill Torment me; What would you do if I ſhould deny? Others when they deny, you do not very eaſily believe: But to us, if we once deny, you preſently give Credit.* Now what was the true Reaſon and Deſign of this Method of Proceeding? Did they delight to hear a Lye merely for its own ſake, without any other Purpoſe or Advantage? Or could they think, that Pain alone ſhould alter the Judgment and Underſtanding, as well as the Will? Either of theſe is certainly moſt unreaſonable to ſuppoſe of them. But the true reaſon why the Pagan Perſecutors reſted ſo fully ſatisfied herewith, was becauſe they were clearly ſenſible, that in gaining of this Point they gained all that was poſſible for them to effect, or could be well deſired, even (ſo far) the utter Ruin and Deſtruction of that Religion, which they ſo endeavoured to root out and exſtinguiſh. For if they could once bring a Chriſtian openly to deny his Faith, and to continue to do ſo, than which they well knew nothing was more contrary to the Nature of Chriſtianity and all Religion, then they had a perfect conqueſt over the Man's Will and Reſolution; and had brought him therein, to forego all that 'twas poſſible for him to part with; (for a Man's belief is not purely in his own Power, tho' the Profeſſion of what he Believes is) all but only what he could not help the keeping of, and would (if he could) part with that alſo, rather than ſuffer Torment. Openly to diſown his Religion, they ſaw plainly, was to forgo all the Benefits thereof, by the Man's violating his own Conſcience, and keeping his inward Faith for no other purpoſe but to upbraid him: And in one Word, by bringing him to this, they made him caſt all the Shame and Diſgrace imaginable both upon himſelf and upon his Religion; which ever after, without true Repentance and Reconfeſſion, could prove no farther ſerviceable either to the Man himſelf, or (through his occaſion, and ſo far as he could hinder) to any other Perſon in the World beſides. So that when all is done, no Man can ſo play the Hypocrite in, or with his Religion, without be-

being in good earneſt, as to the Ruine of that, and his own Deſtruction

Nay, the Perſecuting Heathen, concluded themſelves, to have gained their Point in a great meaſure, if they could but any way ſo contrive the Matter, that a Chriſtian might but ſeem or be thought, (tho' falſely) to comply with them. And accordingly *Euſebius* tells us, *That in the Ninth Year of* Diocleſian, *many ſuffered Martyrdom, among whom there were ſome who underwent the trial without any Benefit or Advantage. For as one was thruſt on by the violence of the Infidels, and brought by them to thoſe unlawful Sacrifices, though the Man did not Offer, yet he was freely diſmiſſed by them, as if he had Offered: So another, tho' he did not ſo much as come near nor touch any impure thing, yet the Heathen affirming, that he had Sacrificed, he did not contradict them, but ſilently went away. Another, cried out with a loud Voice that he utterly abominanated all their Sacrifices; Another, that he was a Chriſtian; Another that he nither had, nor ever would Sacrifice. And yet all theſe by Soldiers placed there for that purpoſe, were violently ſmitten upon the Mouth and Face, and forced to hold their Peace, and then thruſt away by main force. So great a matter did thoſe Enemies of Piety eſteem it, but any way to ſeem, or have it thought, that they had effected what they deſigned upon them.* *Euſe.* Hiſt. Eccl. l. 8. c. 3.

But to return again (as I promiſed) to ſome of the leſs Perſecuting ſort of Roman Emperours. *Adrian* (as I before remarked) in the Hiſtorian *Flavius Vopiſcus*, Writes in a Stile of contempt and ſcornful Admiration at the ridiculous Levitie of thoſe *Baſilidian* Hereticks, whom he calls, *ſome Chriſtians of Egypt*, in that they could change their Religion, as they ſaw occaſion, now Worſhiping with the Chriſtians, anon with the Jews, and ſometimes again with the Gentiles.

Again, in that Reſcript of *Antoninus Pius*, forbidding any farther Perſecution of Chriſtians, publiſhed at *Epheſus*, in the Common Council of all *Aſia*, and ſtill extant in *Euſebius*, we may plainly perceive what cenſure of Diſgrace that mild Emperour was ready to paſs upon the contrary Behaviour, by that honourable character of Commendation, which he there beſtows upon the admirable Conſtanccy of ſincere Chriſtians. His Words are theſe; *Quibus hominibus jam ipſi gravem exhibetis Moleſtiam*, &c. *Thoſe Men to whom you now create ſuch grievous trouble, accuſing them as Impious and averſe from the Worſhip of the Gods, that Religion of theirs which they plainly have, you do thereby very much confirm. For they much rather wiſh, that, being accuſed, they may ſuffer Death for their God, than enjoy Life. So that by their Lives, after this manner freely parted with, they reap a greater and much more Illuſtrious Victory, than if they fulfilled the Commands, which you require to be obſerved by them.* *Euſeb.* hiſt. l. 4. chap. 12.

But ſtill, above all other Inſtances, nothing can be more appoſite to this purpoſe, than both the Words and Actions of another Empe-

Emperour, who, tho' Merciful to all, and far from Perſecuting Chriſtians, yet Lived and Dyed a Heathen; I mean *Conſtantius Clorus*, the Father of *Conſtantine* the Great. For when *Dioteſian* and *Maximine* urged him, to reeſtabliſh the Pagan Rites and Couhſellours, and to diſcharge all Chriſtian Officers from his Court: This mild and prudent Prince, reſolving to take this opportunity, of trying the Conſtancy and Fidelity of his Courtiers, made as if he would put the Order in Execution; and therefore, ſending for all ſorts of Perſons about him, acquaints them with the pleaſure of the Emperours, exhorting them to yield a ſuitable obedience thereto, by ſacrificing to their Idols, and adding withal no ſmall threatnings in caſe of refuſal. Upon this, his Court was divided into two parts; The one conſiſting of ſuch as had onely diſſembled their Faith before, whilſt they carryed Paganiſm in their Hearts, who very readily prepared themſelves to Sacrifice: The other, of ſuch as undervalued all things in Compariſon of Chriſt; who by no Threats or Promiſes could be prevailed upon to comply. After this diſcovery firſt made, *Conſtantius* thinking fit, to make a true diſcovery alſo of his own real Intent and Judgement, preſently Commanded all thoſe Diſſembling Time-ſervers to depart his Court, utterly denying, *That ever they ſhould approve themſelves faithful to him, who had been ſo inſincere towards God himſelf: But he both retained and highly commended the other ſort; not in the leaſt doubting of their good Behaviour towards himſelf, when they had ſo well acquitted themſelves in relation to the Deity.*

Such now was the Judgement of the beſt Emperours. Nor ſhall we find any of thoſe to have been of a different opinion in this matter, who among the Heathens were juſtly eſteemed Philoſophers. *Themiſtius*, who as well deſerved that Name, as any one that ever yet bore that Title, is well known, more than once, to expoſe and deride ſuch Weather-cocks in Religion, who continually changing Colour with the Court, *Adored not God, but the Purple*; highly commending *Jovian*, upon this account, for granting a general Liberty, for every Man to exerciſe his own Religion without diſturbance: By which means (as he aſſures him) he effectually put an end to that curſed Trade of dangerous Diſſemblers and flattering Time-ſervers.

And long before him, 'twas one of the common Aphoriſms of *Socrates, That every Man ought to endeavour to be really ſuch a one, as he deſires to ſeem, and would be thought to be.* And accordingly, when he was accuſed, for not believing thoſe to be Gods, whom his Country-men Believed and Worſhiped for ſuch, all the defence he thought fit to make for himſelf, (which yet he eſteemed ſufficient) is grounded upon the general ſuppoſition of the Hainouſneſs of Hipocriſie, and conſequently that none acquainted with him could think him capable of ſo high a Crime.

For,

For, as his Diſciple *Xenophon* aſſures us, all his anſwer before his Judges was no more than this; *This I very much admire, with what colour of Reaſon* Melitus *my accuſer can ſay, That I do not think thoſe to be Gods, whom this City thinks ſo, when both many others have, and* Melitus *himſelf too, if he had a mind to it, might have ſeen me Sacrificing to them upon the publick Altar.* Which tho' it confutes that common opinion, of his Dying a Martyr for the Belief of one God, does yet no leſs plainly demonſtrate, how far he was from the late Doctrine of the *Leviathan*, and how abominable a thing he concluded it, for a Man to diſſemble in Religion.

How extremely brave likewiſe and altogether free from Slaviſh Fear and Flattery was that of *Calanus* the Indian Philoſopher, in his Letter to *Alexander* the Great, extant in *Philo Judæus*? *I hear (ſaith he) That your Friends adviſe you, to apply Force, and lay Violent Hands upon the Indian Philoſophers, who were never yet acquainted, ſo much as in a Dream, with any thing of our matters. For you may indeed remove our Bodies from one place to another: But you cannot force our Souls, to do what they have no mind to. You may ſooner make Stones and Logs of Wood to Speak. There is no King or Emperour in the whole World, that can compel us to do what we our ſelves have not decreed.*

Nay ſtill, in the laſt place, (to inſiſt no more upon Pagans, much leſs Philoſophers of that kind) ſo naturally baſe and ignoble is it, for a Man to Lie, or to Diſſemble, that ſome of thoſe, who, one would think, ſhould of all others be moſt void of all ſentiments of Honour in ſuch caſes, yet, retaining ſome faint ſhadows thereof in Vain-glory, have had that Principle, ſtrong enough in them, to hurrie them out of the World, rather than ſeem to incur ſo ſhameful an Imputation. For even dull Atheiſm it ſelf, as it has had but too many Confeſſors, ſo has it not wanted alſo ſome few Martyrs, who have choſen to Die, rather than profeſs with their Lips, what they obſtinately pretended, they could no waies in their Hearts Believe. For this was the very caſe of *Vaninus*, who was Burnt to Death at *Tholouſe* upon that Score. we Read likewiſe of another amongſt the Turks, who choſe to Die upon the ſame account: Of whoſe Tragedy we have the particular relation in the worthy Authour of THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TVRKS. Which examples of aſtoniſhing Madneſs, are yet not onely parallel'd, but quite out done by thoſe, who, believing Chriſtianity and the unſpeakable eternal Rewards and Puniſhments it acquaint us with, can yet find in their Hearts to Diſſemble, or deny their Faith, rather than undergo the ſhort preſent Sufferings of a moment upon that account. Govern. Turks. p. 119.

Thus you ſee what the Opinion has been concerning this Matter, of all ſorts of the more impartial, whether *Jews* or *Chriſtians*, whether *Heretick*s, *Turks* or *Pagans*; nay, partly, and upon ſuppoſition, even

even of ſome Atheiſts. And as it is the ſenſe of all the World beſides, ſo I am perſwaded, 'tis ſometimes ſo alſo in the Self-condemned Minds of theſe very Hypocrites themſelves. However, the time is moſt certainly a coming, when they ſhall be thorowly wakened into a quick and never-ending Senſe of Shame and of Confuſion upon this account. Which advances me to my Eighth and laſt Conſideration, *viz.*

CHAP. XIIII.

The unavoidableneſs of that infinite Shame and Miſery, which according to the Eternal and unalterable Nature of Things themſelves, muſt needs be the dreadful Portion of all ſuch abominable Hypocrites and Diſſemblers in the World to come.

HOW naturally ſad muſt needs be the Condition of thoſe who depart hence unmortify'd and full of the love of the World, and cannot tell how to part with ſuch Deſires and Affections, even in a State in which there will be no more World for them to enjoy; The ſame Perſons alſo being (as I have already ſhewn) wholly void of all true Love of God, and of their Neighbours? How is it poſſible for them to enjoy any thing of the Heavenly *State*, (even tho' we could ſuppoſe them in ſuch a *Place* as Heaven) where there is nothing elſe for them to Love beſides God himſelf, and thoſe that love him and are like him? So that ardent Love is the pure Air and very Life of Heaven, without having our Hearts thorowly endued with which bleſſed Habit and Affection, we are no more capable of that heavenly State, than it is here poſſible for us, to live without Breathing, or to breath without Air. Upon which account according to the very nature of Things, What good can they ever expect, who leave this World being themſelves wholly unfurniſhed with all thoſe Divine Qualifications, which are ſo abſolutly neceſſary to capacitate Men for their entrance into the State of true Happineſs, *and to make them meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light?* As the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Col.* 1. 12. The ill Habits we paſs hence with, and want of the contrary Graces, will like natural Incapacities, be ſure to conſign us over to our proper Stations, and place us without any more adoe, on the left Hand with the Goats. Every wicked Man and Diſſembling Hypocrite carries with him a whole Legion of Devils, of tormenting Sins and unmortify'd Luſts; any one

one of which is enough to unheaven Paradiſe, and to turn *Abraham's* Boſom it ſelf into a place of no reſt. Ill diſpoſitions eſtabliſh Hell within Men, and naturally lay the Foundation of their perpetual Miſery; whilſt they ſhall find ſuch curſed Habits will prove thoſe eternal Chains of Darkneſs, to fetter them below amongſt Devils; where Sin ſhall be no more, as here, diſtinguiſhed, but known by its true proper Name, Miſery.

It is impoſſible that he ſhould be finally miſerable, who does not love ſomething more than God; and 'tis no leſs impoſſible that he who does prefer any thing before God, ſhould not be miſerable, if he be continued at all in being. For to love God with all our Hearts, is our only Duty, and our greateſt Happineſs, and not ſo to love him, at once our greateſt Sin and Miſery. And 'twas certainly the deepeſt Senſe of the true nature of Religion, and a ſtrong effect of the great Sincerity of the Man himſelf, that made a Divine Poet of our own, break out into this Pious and moſt Pathetick Ejaculation; *My God, let me not love thee, if I love thee not.*

And indeed, our future Bliſs it ſelf will conſiſt chiefly in our extatic love of God, and in perceiving how we love him, and are beloved by him: Gratitude and Thankfulneſs, and endleſs Love for Love, will be the Life of Heaven. And without attaining here to ſome eminent degree of this Love and Gratitude, our Souls can never be winged thither. Our Saviour therefore, who deſigned our everlaſting Happineſs, did in order to it, contrive the moſt effectual way, to excite our Love, by loving us firſt ſo well, as to lay down his Life for our ſakes, that by his Precedent and Example, we might be even conſtrained ſo to love him again, and to expreſs our Gratitude in ſuch a degree, as to be, at leaſt, willing and prepared to die for his Honour, rather than deny or diſſemble our Faith. And as even now any good Man cannot reflect upon his own willingneſs thus to do, without ſome extraordinary overflowings of Joy and Satisfaction in it: So we ſhall hereafter infinitely more pleaſe our ſelves, and Triumph to all Eternity in the Rembrance and Conſideration of our Readineſs in this frail State, to Sacrifice our very Lives to our Redeemer, and and in perceiving how well God is pleaſed with that Sincerity of our Affections, and how acceptable the ſame is to our bleſſed Saviour. Whereas, were it poſſible that we ſhould ever be admitted into thoſe glorious Manſions, without ſuch Love of God, and having proceeded ſo far in Gratitude, we ſhould have nothing to ſupport or qualify us, for our converſe with and enjoyment of that infinite Fountain and God of Love: But bring horrour of Conſcience, perpetual Shame and Confuſion of Face with us, even into Heaven it ſelf.

For tho' in the ſight and Preſence of God will conſiſt all Joy and Happineſs; yet, can as without Holineſs no Man ſee the Lord, ſo true Love and Sincerity is the only thing, which can enable us to ſuſtain his Preſence. Inſomuch that if a Man's own Heart con-

demns him in this Point, (as every Hypocrites muſt then be ſure to do) it is impoſſible *He ſhould have any Confidence towards God in that day of Judgment:* But nothing, on the contrary, beſides Shame treaſured up for himſelf againſt that Day of Shame.

And how great a miſery and ſevere Puniſhment this will indeed prove at laſt, to all thoſe who depart out of this World impenitent Sinners, and vile Hypocrites, may (however faintly) be conjectured from preſent Examples, as well of ſome who have dyed with mere Shame, and that too upon no ſuch very extraordinary occaſion for that Paſſion, as alſo of very many others who have gladly choſen Death, much rather than ſuffer great temporal Diſgraces any longer.

Varenius in deſcrip. Regni Japon. *p.* 98. & 99.

Beſides, it may be obſerved, how naturally apt we are, to wax red, and be very much abaſhed, when we have at any time occaſion to make but a ſet Speech to any conſiderable number of our fellow Mortals. And how much more are we ſtill apt to be concerned, when we happen to be called in Queſtion, and are to anſwer for our ſelves before any more Auguſt Aſſembly, even though we are ſufficiently conſcious to our ſelves of our own Innocency, as to what may be objected againſt us to our diſparagement?

But what then, muſt we think, will be at laſt the diſmal condition of thoſe who are all over loaden with Guilt, [and knowing themſelves monſtrous by the blackeſt deformity of Sin, come to appear before the moſt dreadful Tribunal of the great God? There to have all that ever they have thought, ſaid, or done, made clearly manifeſt, and there to Anſwer, and to receive Sentence, for all that has been amiſs, in the Sight and Hearing, not only of one particular Aſſembly, City or Nation, but of all the Men now living upon the whole Face of the Earth; Nay, of all the ſeveral Generations of Men, that have ever, or ſhall ever live upon it, from the Beginning to the End of the World; to all which add alſo thoſe innumerable Millions of Holy Angels, and (which is ſtill more conſiderable than all the reſt) the moſt Holy, but highly affronted Jeſus, who would have been, and took ſuch miraculous Pains, to be their Saviour, and ſhall then ſit as their Judge: 'Tis enough almoſt to make a Man ſink and die but ſeriouſly to think what will then be the Shame and infinite Conſternation of all wretched Sinners, and eſpecially of ſuch provoking Hypocrites under thoſe Circumſtances. And yet alas, the thing it ſelf will be much more dreadful than we can now apprehend, and is indeed beyond all Words to deſcribe, beyond all poſſibility of our preſent Imagination.

Notwithſtanding; of any thing that has ever yet been here in this World, methinks, what happened in the time of *Conſtan-*

ſtantine the great, upon that Emperours embracing Chriſtianity, and reſtoring Peace to the Church, ſeems moſt to reſemble, how it ſhall be hereafter, at the laſt Day, with all ſuch Offenders. Some faint glimpſe of which we may be able to diſcover whilſt we conſider how the lapſed were at that time affected. For you might then have beheld whole multitudes of thoſe, who before in the time of Perſecution, had diſgracefully denied their Faith, preſently, upon this great alteration, under the moſt lamentable State and Condition. For how were they pricked to the very Hearts, when they perceived themſelves not only wholly excluded from the Holy Communion, but denied all enterance into the Chriſtian Churches; all Society with the Faithful? How were they confounded at the juſt Honours and profound Reſpects then paid to the noble Confeſſors, and dazled at the luſtre of their glorious Scars ſhinning out, like ſo many ſeveral Conſtellations? And in the mean time, with what extreme Horrour and Regret did they remember their own baſe Cowardice, and quite contrary Behaviour, which had rendred them ſo juſtly infamous and abhorred in the ſight of all? So that perceiving themſelves to have now no ſhare in the common Joy, no kind of portion in the general Exultation and Triumphs of all other Chriſtians, but peſectly overwhelm'd with the deepeſt Shame and Sorrow, they betook themſelves to the Biſhops, and lowly Proſtrating themſelves at their Feet, with whole ſhowers of Tears, humbly acknowledged their hainous Crime, and in the moſt earneſt, but ſubmiſſive manner, entreated, that after moſt ſevere Penances and long Satisfactions perform'd, they might be at laſt admitted to the Peace of the Church, upon their true Repentance.

Repentance! That bleſſed Word ſweetens and chears up all with freſh Comforts and new Life, like a perfect Reſurrection from the Dead. But alas, How widely different therefore will be the Caſe of thoſe whoſe Shame and Regret ſhall be both infinitely greater, and ſure to continue with them to all Eternity, having joined thereto abſolute deſpair of better; whilſt they ſhall perceive themſelves wholly cut off from all hopes and poſſibility of Repentance and Forgiveneſs?

They who *glory in their Shame*, and they who are aſhamed of what they ought moſt of all to glory in, are both of them in ſo high a degree guilty, that 'tis not very eaſy to determine which is indeed the moſt hainous: Yet methinks, in ſome reſpect, the laſt ſeems to be the more monſtrous perverſion of the two. For though the firſt gives that to Sin and to the Devil, which belongs to God alone and Goodneſs; yet the other, caſting, (if poſſible) a ſtill higher contempt upon both theſe, do after ſuch a manner treat God and Religon, as they

ought to treat Sin and Satan. And therefore, as of all things in the World, nothing can be more truly Shameful, ſo there's nothing of which Men ſhall be hereafter more unconceivably aſhamed of, and actually confounded at, than of their having been thus aſhamed of their Religion.

So that ſhould the great Judge, at the laſt Day, be wholly ſilent in the caſe, and leave things onely to their natural conſequences; yet the guilty Hearts of ſuch ſelf-condemned Criminals, by an Inſinuation as quick and intimate as the Senſe of their own Souls is to them, would ſoon Read to them their fatal Sentence. And were it then poſſible for them, to make the leaſt attempt of Entrance, their own Shame, like an evil Angel with a flaming Sword, would be ſure to guard them from the Tree of Life, and for ever drive them from the Heavenly Paradiſe, thus lowdly pronouncing their dreadful Doom,

Depart from hence, Vile Hypocrites, for ever far depart theſe Glorious and Happy Manſions, prepared for the Sincere and Faithful, and ſuch of which none are ever capable of Inhabiting, but Souls Duely qualifi'd, and ſuch onely as are full of Divine Love and Zeal, and other Holy Preparations and Chriſtian Habits, which are the onely Natural means of enabling any, to Live the Life of Heaven. After St. *Peter's* denyal of him, one look from his Lord, even in his loweſt Suffering, deſpiſed Condition, was ſufficient to make him go out, and Weep bitterly: But now ſince he ſets in his glorified Eſtate, as Judge of the whole World, and Cloathed with all the Majeſty of Heaven, how will you be able to bear for ever, nay but one Moment, to look upon, or receive a look from him, whom you know your ſelves to have ſo highly Deſpiſed, and finally Deny'd, without Repentance? Beſides, are glorious Saints and Martyrs, who, for the Love of God and their Religion, *Loved not their Lives even unto Death*, are they fit Company for ſuch loathſome Diſſemblers and Apoſtates? What Pleaſure or Delight are you able to take in a Society ſo infinitely different in all their qualities and diſpoſitions? Nay, with what other Face, beſides that of abſolute Confuſion, can you look upon the now dazling Countenances of them, who, to you, alwaies were before, (and now are, than ever, much more) *Grievous even to behold*? Depart therefore, according to the juſt Summons of your own Confuſion, into the Dark and far diſtant, but to you ſuitable Regions of everlaſting Contempt and Shame; the proper Dwelling of Apoſtate Angels, of your Fellow-hypocrites and Unbelievers, and of other curſed Deniers, Blaſphemers, and Apoſtates.

Nor let any one fondly ſuppoſe it poſſible, for ſuch Sinners then, as now, ſtill to put on a brazen Forehead, or to ſilence this Voice of Shame, or remain void thereof through the like brutiſh Stupidity and Inconſideration which now poſſeſſeth them.

For

For Mens Dreams will then be at an end, all their Miſts diſpelled, and diſguiſes taken away, their Eies be open'd to See things as they are, and they forced to conſider and clearly apprehend all thoſe eſſential reaſons and inſeparable Circumſtances, which render the nature of their Sin ſo much above all things truely ſhameful. They ſhall then be no longer able not to diſcern, how miſerably they have abuſed and cheated their own precious Souls, debaſed their Nature, and rendred themſelves Deformed. They ſhall then plainly ſee, how wholly their Sin was of their own choice, through their own fault, and how certainly they might have help'd it. They ſhall likewiſe clearly perceive, what height of the moſt abominable Ingratitude their offence argues and proceeds from, and with what prodigious folly and Madneſs it has been all along accompanied. In like manner, all the cauſes of their former Imprudence ſhall then wholly ceaſe and be removed; the expedients they here made uſe of to keep themſelves void and inſenſible of Shame, ſhall have then no more place, nor be any farther ſerviceable to the former Purpoſes; but be turned at laſt only to encreaſe their endleſs Confuſion. For though whilſt Men are here, and have ſtill an opportunity of proceeding farther, in the enjoyments of forbidden ſenſual Pleaſures; long Cuſtom in the way of Sin, does ſo reconcile them to it, that they can now follow the ſame, free from their firſt Heart-ſmitings, and the Rebukes of their own Minds, and without being ſenſible of any Impreſſions of Shame: yet then, when they can properly Sin no more, but come to anſwer for their Offences, their ill Habits will moſt of all Gall and ſeverely reproach them; ſo that thorowly awakened with their ſenſitive Smart, to conſider how long and ſecurely they have formerly wallowed in their Mire, Conſcience will be ſure to redouble its force, and to the full revenge of it ſelf upon them, for all their former ſtifling of it, and the Worm that ſhall never dye gain thereby ſo many more ſtings of intollerable Shame and Sorrow. Again, all falſe Principles and corrupt Doctrines of Men, by the help of which they were here enabled to continue in their Hypocriſy, or the Commiſſion of any other Sin, without Shame, can then have no farther place in their Minds; Men ſhall be no longer able to continue Infidels or Misbelievers: But all ſhall there clearly underſtand how groſly they have formerly been miſtaken, and how directly contrary they have acted, to their Duty and their Happineſs, and how eaſily and certainly they might have ſeen as much, had they not willfully ſuffered their Eyes to be blinded by the Prejudices of ſome vile Luſt or other, or through their moſt unreaſonable admiration of ſome Idol Teacher of their own ſetting up, and more depending upon his

his Authority, than upon the expreſs plain Word of God to the contrary. Farthermore all thoſe Flattering Excuſes, or Defences, by which Diſſemblers now endeavour to conceal their Shame, and to countenance and encourage one another in the ſame wicked Courſes, ſhall then have an end, and be turned only into ſo many bitter Curſings and mutual Accuſations of of each other, and of themſelves, whilſt all their Faces ſhall be covered with moſt deſerved Shame for ever.

Laſtly, all thoſe ſenſual Objects and Delights, in the enjoyment of which the fond Hypocrite did ſo far place his Happineſs, that as long as he could have the ſame continued to him, he was able to contemn all Shame, ſhall then be far removed, and he, being made uncapable for ever of any ſuch Pleaſure or Enjoyments, have nothing elſe to fill and take up his Mind, but the tormenting Conſideration of his Sin and Shame and endleſs Miſery.

To all which, let me now only add this following Caution; Let not any one, (as moſt are to apt to do) think of what I have been laſt diſcourſing, as of things uncertain, or at a great diſtance from them. For as the whole World of our Anceſtors are long ſince gone that Journey, ſo there's no Man amongſt us of any conſiderable Age, but has ſufficient occaſion to conſider, that moſt of thoſe with whom he has been acquainted, are already gone before him into that World of Spirits; and we ſee others ſtill daily a going thither. And as much ſtrangers as we now make our ſelves to that future State, or that to us, there's nothing elſe keeps us here, or detains us from being there alſo, beſides a little Breath, which we carry in our Noſtrils, and which will ſoon expire for ever. There's nothing therefore of which we can be more certain, than that in a very ſhort time we ſhall all, one after another, try the grand Experiment of this Matter, to our endleſs Happineſs or Miſery; and ought with the greateſt ſeriouſneſs and Application to prepare our ſelves accordingly.

So that now ſumming up the whole force of all the former Conſiderations together, within this narrower compaſs, I ſhall thus conclude.

CHAP. XV.

The Conclusion.

UNleſs we can find in our Hearts to prefer the vileſt of Hereticks, and the worſt of Atheiſts, before the moſt glorious Saints and Martyrs; the Doctrines of the *Leviathan* before the Precepts of Chriſt and his Apoſtles; and *Simon Magus* ſhall rightly be adjuged more Orthodox than *Simon Peter*: unleſs to be aſhamed of Chriſt and his Religion be indeed to Glorifie him; to deny him be to confeſs him before Men, and to ſhew a baſe cowardly Fear, be indeed to exert a genuine Faith, and an Argument of true Chriſtian Fortitude; unleſs groſly to lie, and ſhamefully to diſſemble may be allowed to commence Virtues, and become requiſite Zeal, and true Chriſtian Simplicity: In ſhort, unleſs all theſe, and a thouſand other monſtrous Contradictions can be reconciled together; then ſuch diſſembling Time-ſervers can never expect any other than to follow their beloved Doctrines to the place from whence they came, even to the Regions of the Prince of Darkneſs, and to have their Eternal Portion with their Brethren the Hypocrites and Unbelievers.

But if it be indeed ſo, That the only true Wiſdom conſiſts in taking care by any means, to keep ones ſelf in a whole Skin; if it can be clearly demonſtrated, That the Doctrine of the Croſs is indeed no better than down right Fooliſhneſs; and that they who lay down their Lives here for Chriſts ſake, ſhall loſe them Eternally hereafter; if all the Primitive Martyrs are to be condemned for the greateſt Fools and Mad-men, and Self-murderers; and all the wiſeſt Governers of the Church in all Ages, are to be accounted Fooliſh and Tyranical, in the ſevere diſcipline they maintained, and the Penalties inflicted upon the lapſed; nay, if Heaven it ſelf alſo could be miſtaken, in the extraordinary and miraculous Inflictions upon ſuch Offenders; if it can be made out, that God has no right to any thing at all of us, but only a little of a falſe rotten Heart, and that we are not obliged to glorifie him with our Bodies as well as with our Souls; If it be poſſible to reconcile Light and Darkneſs, the Service of God with that of *Mammon*; then alſo may the Thief that mocked him upon the Croſs, as well as he who confeſſed him, be with Chriſt in Para-

Paradiſe; and then the Boſom of *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful may prove a fit Receptacle for Scorners and Unbelievers.

And verily, when there ſhall be no communion of Saints, neither on Earth, nor yet in Heaven; when Hypocriſy comes to ſerve inſtead of Sincerity, and the luke-warm *Laodicean* temper ſhall become of all others the moſt acceptable to the Almighty; when Heaven ſhall be quite void of Charity, and of all other Graces; when it ſhall be poſſible to enjoy God, without loving him, or being in any proportion like him; when God can hate Truth, and delight in the contrary; in a Word, when he can deny himſelf, and ceaſe to be any longer God; then alſo will the great Gulf be quite unfixed, and then, and never before then, may ſuch vile Libertines as we have been diſcourſing of, expect to ſee the Lord, and enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Since all this therefore is ſo abſolutely true and certain, what height of Madneſs is it for the fond Hypocrite to imagine it poſſible for him, after this manner, to mock and deceive his Maker? When by ſo endeavouring, he only turns all that lame Service of his into mere drudgery, which when ſincerely performed is the moſt perfect Freedom; and wholly depriving himſelf of all that preſent Joy and unſpeakable Satisfaction, which ſincerity even now affords, and to which nothing in this Life can be comparable, does at the ſame time alſo render himſelf for ever uncapable of the happineſs of the World to come, and fits himſelf only for, and deliberately ſeems to chuſe everlaſting Miſery. For he who thus offends againſt the firſt Commandement; *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods but me*, is guilty of the breach of all, and can never perform any of the reſt to any purpoſe. Nor is it yet ſo eaſy a matter as ſome imagine, to be able truly to profeſs with holy *David*, *I have ſaid unto the Lord thou art my God*: Whilſt yet upon this real Ability, or the contrary, does naturally depend all our true preſent as well as future, either Happineſs or Miſery. Conſider then fond Wretches, what it is you part with, and for what. Conſider now in time, what thou art a doing, O Politick Mad-man, who thus vainly endeavoureſt to compound the Matter between God and Mammon. And then tremble thou Earth, *And be aſtoniſhed O ye Heavens at this*, that ever any People ſhould be ſo ſottiſh, *as to commit two ſuch Evils; to forſake him who is the Fountain of living Water, and to hew out to themſelves Ciſterns, broken Ciſters, that can hold no Water.* Think, O ſerious think! What it is now lulls thee ſo faſt aſlip in thy fatal Lethargy, and for the ſake of which alone thou canſt be ſo well contented to run ſo great a Hazard, and of ſo infinitely miſerable Conſequence. Is it not then the Love

of

of the World, and the vain purſuit of ſenſual Pleaſures which now ſtupifie the Mind? That *World which paſſeth away and the Luſts thereof*; *that Life which is a meer Vapour*; thoſe vain Enjoyments of which thou muſt very ſhortly take thy Eternal Farewel, and be capable of reliſhing the ſame no more for ever. Is it fit that thy divine Soul, made for and capable of ſo high things, ſhould be continually depreſſed and fettered, and made a perfect Slave to thy Body? To that Body of thine, which in it ſelf is of no better a Nature than the Fleſh of thoſe bruit Creatures, which thou daily deſtroy'ſt and feed'ſt on, to keep they own lump of Clay together and from mouldering. That which thou didſt eat to Day, was yeſterday or the Day before, as compleat an Animal (bateing thy reaſonable and immortal Soul, which thou makeſt no uſe of) as thy ſelf, and no leſs capable of enjoying the ſame ſenſual Pleaſures, which alone thou art apt ſo much to purſue and doat on; and a few Years at moſt, will certainly put an end to thy Dream; when all that can be now ſeen of thee ſhall be diſſolved, and fall into Aſhes and Corruption; and all thoſe vain Trifles and poor Enjoyments, which now take up thy Head and Heart, ſignifie no more to thee than if thou hadſt never been; unleſs only to encreaſe thy Torments, in a too late ſenſe of thy moſt prodigious Guilt and Folly, whilſt thou remembreſt them. This will e're long be thy Caſe, and may be ſo, for ought thou knoweſt, before to Morrow. So that there is really at this very time, nothing betwixt thee and Hell, but only the ſlight Partition of a little thin Breath, which ten thouſand things may eaſily obſtruct; inſomuch that 'tis a very great Miracle that thou ſhouldeſt be able to live at all, but nothing ſtrange, that thou ſhouldeſt ceaſe to do ſo. If thou canſt make a ſhift to lay aſide all theſe thoughts, and keep thy ſelf inſenſible of any ſuch thing for the preſent, and compoſe thy ſelf to Sleep and Security; yet thy danger is really the ſame, whether thou art apprehenſive of it or no: Nay indeed, infinitly greater and more inevitable upon this very account of thy not conſidering it: For thou wilt be ſhortly forced to conſider, (though too late) whether thou wilt or no, in that State, where Men can continue no more Atheiſts or Hypocrites; and when thou awakeſt, find thy ſelf ſur-rounded with Devils and everlaſting burnings.

And now, let ſuch hardned Miſcreants (if they can ſtill find in their Hearts to do ſo) purſue their wonted Courſe, and betake themſelves to their only beſt Argument againſt this, by ſcornfully laughing, for a Moment, at all theſe Matters, till woful Experience ſhall change the Scene with them, and ſadly convince them of their Folly. In the mean tim, as for all thoſe who by the Grace of God, are for the preſent far bet-

ter disposed and qualified, as ever they desire to stand fast, and still escape the fatal Contagion, so let them carefully avoid the Example, the Doctrines, nay, as much as well they can, even the company of such double Minded Wretches, and desperate Dissemblers. Whilst all good Christians will be ready, most devoutly to join with me, in those Excellent Prayers of our Holy Mother the Church.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly Wills and Affections of sinful Men; Grant unto thy People, that they may love the thing which thou Commandest, and desire that which thou doest Promise, that so among the sundry and manifold Changes of the World, our Hearts may surely there be fixed, where true Joys are to be found. Give us Grace, that being not like Children carried away with every blast of vain Doctrine, we may be established in the truth of thy Holy Gospel. Grant us such Strength and Protection, as may support us in all Dangers, and carry us through all Temptations: Graft in our Hearts the love of thy Name, encrease in us true Religion, and the most hearty Sincerity therein, without which whosoever liveth is counted Dead before thee; nourish us with all Goodness, and of thy great Mercy keep us in the same: That thou being our Ruler and Guide, we may so pass through things Temporal, that we finally lose not the things Eternal; Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

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